

NOW INCORPORATING FILM VIEWS

CINEMA

SEPTEMBER 1997 No. 25

Papers 35

THE TEEN COMMANDMENTS

The Teen Movie Considered

plus

ANIMATION

ED PRESSMAN

SALLY BONGERS

SCORSESE
AND SCHRADER

EDENS LOST

MARY LAMBERT

REVIEWS: SWEETIE, GEORGIA,
LOVEBOY, BONZA, BATMAN, NEW
PLUS: BOOKS, TECHNICALITIES, PROTESTS
AND CENSORSHIP LISTINGS

COVER: KATIE HARRIS
AND BOB MANKIELSON
IN LOVEBOY

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On July 6th 1988 we announced our independence. The day Atlab Australia seceded from its union with the Australian Television Network.

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JOHN MEILLON 1934-1989



John Meillon, who sadly died in August, in one of his finest films, Peter Weir's *The Cars That Die First*.

20th MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM AWARDS

THE GRAND PRIX CITY OF MELBOURNE AWARD FOR BEST FILM

Twilight City (Sussex, Australia)
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Collective, London. \$4,000

THE KERRY BARRA AWARD FOR BEST AUSTRALIAN FILM (SPONSORED BY FILM SYDNEY)

An Ordinary Moment (Olivia Brooks)
\$1,500

THE STATE FILM CENTRE AWARD FOR BEST CHILDREN'S FILM

AMBS (Tony Collingswood), National
Film & TV School, London
(Illustration contest)

THE KING CHIMAS AWARD FOR BEST STUDENT FILM

Life At Me (Stewart Carter),
Seaside Film & TV School,
Melbourne. \$1,000

THE SCHWARTZ PUBLISHING AWARD FOR BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM

Emblems (David Pennington) United
Kinexfilm. \$1,500

THE HAMMILL FIVE AWARD FOR BEST ANIMATION

Overland On The Grass (Pete Ford,
Enigma, US\$9. \$1,500)

THE RONALD ARNOLD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY

Ruby Wolf (David Cassar), Australia.
\$1,500

THE FRONT PAGE MANAGEMENT AWARD FOR BEST FICTION FILM AWARDED JOINTLY TO

The Maid Whore (senior-director
Adam Barnard), New York, USA
and

Over Boy (senior-director Geoffrey
Wright), Melbourne. \$1,500

CERTIFICATES OF MERIT WERE

AWARDED TO:

Stephen's (William McLeod), Peter
Coyland (Pissard), *One Day Beyond*
(Natalie Henderson), *Jagan* (Pichai),
Julius (Nathan Lee), *Don't No 7* (Barrett
Hartley), *Crash* (Experimental),
Shadow Pans, (Margot Noss),
Australia (Fugateville), *AMBS* (Tony
Collingswood), U.K. (Oxley),
Relevance For Labour Anatomies,
(Brothers Dancy), U.K. (Amsterdam),
The World in Whirling (Peter
Rogers), Canada (Documentary), *A
Little Life* (Elizabeth Hartley),
Australia (Documentary)

LOS AN GELOS

The producers compete for the 1990
Grand Award. *Adams on the Green*, filmed in
the July issue of *Gianna Pagine* in *Dark
Movie Pictures*

SPOLETO



The Spoleto Film and Video Festival
will be held at the State Film Centre,
Melbourne, from September 18 to
21. The program opens with Michael
Lebanon's controversial new film,
Reveries.

Other films include Terence Davis's
trilogy of *Children*, *Madness* and
Child and *Transfiguration*. Davis did
the well-known *Daughters*, *Still Love*.
A section of the festival is devoted to
Pacific issues, and presents recent works
from Hawaii, Nagano, New Zealand and Austr-
lia. Other sections include: Gay Film and Foreign Film from India.
In its twenty years, Spoleto covers Male Order (sexual politics and
male images), Out of the Ordinary (women, feminism and narrative),
Love and Order (judgemental approaches to reality), and Recorder (film
journalism and the analytical approach)

LETTER



"Here have women been
represented among the six girls,
the women and the vagabonds?"
explains the rule book on page 10
of *Gianna Pagine* for March 1989.
The last place you'll find out is
in "Women Game War", the
article which follows. To support
the cartoon that "writing about
women in western films is a little
like writing about women in
Willy Wonka", Ron Lucas cites
several films. Seven, in a field of
cinema which credulous with
gender roles for women. Early
cinema even like Ruth Roland
and Helen Gibson appeared in
scores of western chapter plays.
Why no mention of them, not of

Lillian Gish in *The Wind*, Spoleto's great picture of a woman developed
by the masonry and labour of frontier film (A film, incidentally,
scripted by a woman, Frances Marion).

How in any discussion of women in westerns possible without a
mention of *Shane* in *Reveries* and *Don't Ride Against* Or
Johnny Gunner, with its final gunfight between Joan Crawford
and Michael McCauley? What happened in *Gene Tierney* in the 1941
Red Snow, Elizabeth Montgomery in the remake, or Ruth Roman in
Red Snow's daughter? Davis Day in *Calamity Jane* and Jane Alexander
in the 1984 revisionist version (written by Suzanne Claxton, by the
way). Why no mention of *The Harvey Girls*, with Judy Garland as a
flourishing western and its classic all women bar room brawl? Seven credits
for *Seven Sisters*, where sexual purity is meticulously observed. How
about those business western heroines? Marlene in *A Hard To
Tame* (and *Seven Of Nine Sisters*, if it comes to that), Anne O'Leary
played by Betty Hutton in *Seven Of Nine Sisters* and Elizabeth Taylor
in *Seven Of Nine Sisters*. *Seven Sisters* in *Seven Sisters* in *Seven Sisters*.
What about *Seven Sisters* as an actress in *Seven Sisters*, *Seven Sisters*,
as a *Seven Sisters* in *Seven Sisters*, *Seven Sisters* in *Seven Sisters*.
Consider: There's the whole Howard Hawks canon, filled with
powerful women who trade winks and punches with the men, and
nearly have them standing: Jeanne Reno in *Red River*, Angie Dickinson
in *Red River*, Madeline Carey and others in *Red River* - script by (Ms)
Lola Brooker

Maybe it's hard to find women in *Willy Wonka*, but to miss the whole
takes real dedication. Maybe Ms Lucas wasn't looking!

Sincerely, JOHN BAXTER





SALLY cinematographer BONGERS particulair

Report
by
Mary
Colbert

One *Sally* was shown the same year in *Un Certain Regard* (with *Paranoid Memory* and *Tire Ferme*). Bongers had already won for *A Girl from Australia* the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), won the Palm of Or for shorts at the 1986 Cannes Festival. And their bold and quiet *A Girl*

Bongers has been nominated again in 1989, this time for *Sweetie*, which is the first 16 mm Australian feature to have been shot by a woman. Bongers is proud of the nomination because "a woman is a precedent." In an area where females experience great difficulties getting a job, a nomination is a bonus. She is very excited to be up there with the best in the field, but also level-headed: "I'm not the first woman to deserve it. If more women had been given the opportunity, the list would be much longer. But it does require a combination that you are really working on the unit."

Bongers's confidence and determination have paid off. Interviewed about future prospects after graduating from the AFTRS four years ago, Bongers was optimistic: "I'm not worried. If you stick to what you're doing, you'll get there. I don't expect to be employed because I am a woman, but because of the quality of my work. It's only a matter of time." She staunchly refused to compromise by working as women's assistant in the lean times, because "it would have set me back at least five years."

RARELY HAS AN AUSTRALIAN FILM CREATED SUCH A SENSE OF ANTICIPATION AS *SWEETIE*, PHOTOGRAPHED BY SALLY BONGERS AND DIRECTED BY JANE CAMPION. THIS EXPECTATION WAS FURTHER HEIGHTENED

WHEN THE FILM WAS SELECTED IN COMPETITION AT THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL THIS YEAR, AND CREATED A CONTROVERSY BY DAZZLING THE CRITICS AND POLARIZING THE AUDIENCE.

Today, Bongers is being acknowledged on her own terms—as one of a new breed of filmmakers determined to change the fabric and horizon of cinema in this country. Along with Jane Campion and John Hillcoat (*Ghosts... of the Civil Dead*), her work bears the stamp of bold statement. And at barely 30, that is quite an achievement.

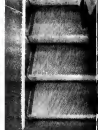
Bongers and Campion share a common, and complementary, perception of film strongly influenced by art backgrounds. "Jane and I share the ideal of making the visual side of film as important as other aspects. We have a commitment to push ourselves in new directions." They are not interested in the big epic, but the little moments which shape lives, the interior which must be expressed through small gestures, the ordinary that becomes the extraordinary. Thus far, the little moments have provided the fabric for their films, stylistically the designs have been bold, confronting.

"I have to be bold about what I do. I don't mean that the visual has to take over, but that it should enhance the meaning and make it stronger. Film language can express so much and I feel really driven to add that dimension."

"I don't believe Australian films have visually challenged audiences as much in the past; the cinematography is so restrained. The camera is used in a literal way, following actors from point to point (I call it 'dot-to-dot' film making'), tracking (which I love) and panning end-cue—"

ILLUSTRATIONS: CAROLINE TUCKER (TOP OF SPREAD),
 WHICH SHOWS DIRECTOR BART AND HISREW: A JACQUES-
 CHENY (LEFT), THE SECOND TEAM SHOT IN HUNGARY FOR
 DIRECTOR AND CAMERON, AND TWO YEARS EARLIER (RIGHT) (B&B)

SALLY BONGERS



rarely. There seems to be little question-
 ing of the reason for a particular
 shot. "What's the best way to en-
 hance the script at this point? Is this
 being expressed as fully as possible in
 visual terms?"

Bongers strongly believes the
 power of images and the visual aware-
 ness of the public are underestimated
 by most filmmakers. "Exposure to
 ads and video music clips has sharp-
 ened audience's visual responses.
 They are acutely conscious of visual
 clues — if not aesthetically, then by
 instinct, and a gut reaction can be
 very powerful."

"I don't think there's anything
 wrong with making films for a specific audience. If we had taken the
 scope of *Twelve* and shot it conservatively, no original meaning would
 have been lost. You either make the film you conceived, or you don't.
 When you start compromising, you lose the reason, but if you make
 the film honestly, you come up with the most powerful material."

Bongers and Cameron were trying to break new ground by

*"I don't believe Australian
 films have visually challenged
 audiences much in the past; the cine-
 matography is so restrained. The camera
 is used in a literal way, following
 actors from point to point, tracking
 and panning indiscriminately. There
 seems to be little questioning of the
 reason for a particular shot."*



moving away from the traditional feature structure. They cut up the
 predictable shape into small sections of little moments. The focus in
 the early part is on Kay (Karen Colson), a nurse and introverted
 bank clerk who enters a new relationship with Louis (Tom Lyons). But
 this relationship provides into the background with the visit of her
 sister, Susan (Genevieve Lemon), and the film becomes absorbed
 with the domestic family drama.



divide and separate

"I like using darkness to create

a different shape to the frame, cutting

it or making a slit down one side to

create an irregularity ...

So much commercial product is overlit.

What are they all afraid of?"

"We didn't want our audience to be lulled into a feeling of security. It's important to place them in different areas of mind, to be alert and questioning." Bongers is speaking of *Awara*, but also reflecting her general attitude to filmmaking. Liberation of space and camera appears to be the motto: "You have 360 degrees and you can put the camera anywhere. It's not that I want to be different for the sake of it, I just don't feel the need to be constrained by what's been done in the past."

A favorite means of changing perspective is shooting high angles downwards. Bongers goes as an example from *Awara* where Kay is lying in bed after having observed Swenne's wedding, their father in the bath. The camera and audience look down on Kay's face to register her shock and confusion. Had she seen a suggestion of incest or just Swenne's naturally inherent vulnerability "It is by far the most effective angle to convey that ambiguity", explains Bongers.

Art has played a significant role in moulding her approach and was an integral part of her life, her mother working as a painter. The only subjects Bongers enjoyed at school were art and as competences, including, still photography and the Super 8 club. "Without these I would never have survived school, they were my only redeeming features. The aspiration to become an artist was my casual impulse. It is directly related to my filmmaking. I saw film as a way of incorporating art with earning a living."

"I have always had a way of looking at things that was different. In photography class at school, I always wanted to go to the extreme - press on grade 8 paper, push film through five crops. I wasn't consciously rebelling, but when I looked at other people's work it seemed so much tamer. I tended to work from instinct a lot."

Not surprisingly, Bongers was inspired by such 'art' filmmakers as Godard, Truffaut and Antonioni, who rebelled against traditional linear formats and sought a deeper level of expression of the event self through images. She was impressed by their unconventional way of looking at the world, that removal of relationship between people and subjects, the dehumanised perspective, the radical use of space and time. The early films of Antonioni, especially, influenced Bongers's ideas on framing. From then on, it was a case of exploring her own.

Bongers maintains that the key to cinematography is framing. "There are so many ways you can position or frame a shot to make a difference in meaning, but too many people lose expression when faced with the technology of the process."

"I love setting, dressing and working out where things should be. When I'm composing a frame, I like to start out with a empty and place things in it gradually, building up the layers till eventually it conveys everything the script requires. But it's important for me to start with that clean sheet."

As much as possible, Bongers likes to create the

illusion of depth by lighting deep into the frame and by cinematographing the actors to and from the camera. She also loves a dark look and heaps of contrast. "I like using darkness to create a different shape to the frame, cutting or making a slit down one side to create an irregularity, avoiding the traditional or classic rectangular frame. I don't want to be afraid to bring in a lot of darkness. So much commercial product is overlit. What are they all afraid of?"

Bongers admits she used to be terrified of lighting in the early days, but in *A Girl's Own Story* (made in third year at the APTES) she realised that if she actually wanted to work in cinematography she would have to come to grips with it. Now Bongers finds "playing with light" one of the most satisfying aspects of her craft. In fact, one avenue of employment between projects during the lighting summer dips.

With *Awara*, Bongers's work has entered a new phase and right now she feels passionate about pushing her cinematography further, especially on features. She loves the stimulation of the collaboration process, with people acting as analysts for each other, refining and improving ideas. She believes more filmmaking teams could collaborate more strongly. "One of the reasons I love working with Jan is that she responds so well to that process. I believe you make a stronger film that way." It was the same on *Margot Muth's Shadow House*, for which Bongers has been nominated for Best Cinematography in the non-feature section.

"I need to be passionate about what I'm doing. It's easier to give a lot to a film if you commit yourself to the script. I have a lot to offer and I don't want to just sit back."

Bongers would love to collaborate again with Campion, but realises they both need to expand through separate experiences (Campion is currently in New Zealand directing a mini series about





BEHIND THE FIVE LAMBS FROM
FEEL, THE FIRST CAMPION FILM
OWN COLLABORATION, AND
RECENTLY DIRECTED, AS WERE
ALONG THE REDDING RAIL.

Janet Frame: "I believe you create your own opportunities, imagination is the only limit. I'd love to have the opportunity to work in America with directors like David Lynch ("Blue Velvet is one of the most significant films I've seen, it has an amazing subtlety and unexpected ways of showing the dark side of character"), David Byrne, Peter Weir and David Morin, who did *The Thin Blue Line* [I love the way he used documentary material in a feature film way]. She would also like to work in Australia with John Hillcoat ("Gleaze is such a powerful statement"). Concerned that all sounds too grand, Bongers adds, "I have a lot of energy and ideas. I feel I have a lot to contribute."

Meanwhile, Bongers is getting on the New York Film Festival, where *Sevens* is being shown, and is hoping to complete shooting a 60-minute experimental documentary, *Residue*. Funded by the Australia Film Commission's Creative Development Branch, it uses documentary in new, traditional ways, something she has been interested in since beginning film school. "I get inspired by the possibility of dissolving traditional linear forms and structures, and using documentary characters like fiction ones, stylizing and controlling the film in a way similar to drama or a poem." This is a technique Bongers has already used in the documentary, *Four of a Kind*, which she directed, shot and edited.

Prospects look quite bright now, but that hasn't always been the case. She hated school and rebelled against the repression of the system. "It wasn't an active rebellion because I was so depressed about being there that I had very little energy. A lot of the time I would just be on the lawn and not talk to people - though that sort of became a refuge. I had to fight the whole way to retain my identity, and I know I was far more stubborn than most. Because I refused to compromise, I emerged relatively intact."

Bongers believes the repressive influence of the education system stifles natural creativity and individuality. "We are all created to it and have it when we're born, but it's beaten out of us along the way. I find individuality really lacking today."

A supportive home environment was crucial to surviving the school years and has played a significant part in her career. "My parents espoused us to the arts, and encouraged independence and self-sufficiency. They gave us the confidence to take on whatever path we chose. I feel privileged to have that home environment."

Bongers was encouraged to do camera work by a lecturer at the West Australia Institute of Technology, where she studied Art and Design. But at the APTNS Bongers once more came into contact with institutions which she believes attempts to control and mold its students. She admits it provided wonderful opportunities - "fantastic equipment", etc. - but there was very little encouragement of super-

mentation. People working in traditional areas, such as commercial films, linear documentaries and predictable formats, were much more valued. "It was disappointing our work was not more appreciated."

Significantly, it was at the APTNS that Bongers met a number of people with whom she found an affinity of aesthetics and filmmaking ideals. With some she would form important links, such as Campion. "As soon as Jane showed me the script for *Proof*, I was wrapped in it. It was so succinct, so direct and simple." They found they shared many ideas - particularly to make films of their own, original, modern films that were relevant to their generation.

When she elected to become a cinematographer, Bongers knew she was opting for a difficult course. But she wasn't daunted by the male domination, the boys networking or the other obstacles and myths. She believed in her own ability.

Bongers has worked fairly consistently, but many of the opportunities have been provided by networking with other women. "Women open doors to other women. Margaret Peak offered Gill Armstrong her chance to direct a feature, Jane Campion gave me a hint to shoot one, and I employed Jane Cooke as camera operator. But I didn't compromise standards to get Jane the job because she's female; I believed she was the best person for it. It's a matter of trust."

"Perhaps even find it difficult to trust us in an area of technical responsibility. A lot of the time it's not conscious discrimination but of wanting to work with those you know and trust."

As technical photography on a feature, Bongers had a first-hand opportunity to disprove some of the myths that prevailed about women working in technical areas. "According to one myth, women are not physically strong enough to carry and handle the bulky equipment required in filmmaking. But there is no substance to it. There are so many people working on a feature [her own team had eight] that no one person has to carry it all. As DCP, I carried less stuff than ever before. Basically all I had to do was work with my light meter and my mind. For the myth people."

"Women have as much to offer camera or any area. There is no proof for it, but I believe there is an intuitive feminine aesthetic which can enrich everyone's work. Till there is an equal share of work, and as long as talented women are deprived of the opportunities, it is everyone's loss. Men can also gain from sharing the process."

Generally Bongers is optimistic about the future. "I do feel there are new uses of Australian filmmaking around the corner, with younger people like Jane and John Hillcoat coming through. They've been around for a while but now they are getting the opportunities to make features. This will influence the way films are made here and open another level which will affect all areas of film and TV. When films such as *Sevens* and *Gleaze* come out, they shake up the film environment and push ideas further. That is why they should receive support. They bring a much needed freshness and boldness to the filmmaking climate."

NOTE

1. Jane Frame died from an ill man before it was blown up to 85 mm



Tom Hanks
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 ON LAUGHS
big
 ON FUN
big
 ON VIDEO



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Movie

W H I T E D I T T E R

?

THE TIME HAS COME,
IN THE NAME OF THE TEEN MOVIE,
TO OVERCOME A FEW
RESISTANCES AND TO SETTLE
A FEW SCORES...

by Adrian Martin

THERE WAS A MOMENT, earlier this year, when both *Time* magazine and TV's *Entertainment This Week* kept breathlessly to the conclusion that – sigh of relief – the decade of the 'teen movie' was over. (Of course, teen movies have been around for ages, but the late 1970s began a boom period when the film market was perceived to be predominantly teenage.) Adults were, according to the demographers, starting to go to the theatre again, and mainstream cinema was, accordingly, attempting to 'grow up' once more, to reflect 'mature' preoccupations. Scarcely two weeks later, however, a *Time* reviewer was wailing the praises of *Heathers*, and dutifully noting the existence of Richard Linklater's minimal *Sling* – the two headlines about teenagers in high school, while Leonard Maltin on *ITW* was cooing, business as usual, with the latest releases featuring Corey Haim, River Phoenix, Winona Ryder and Patrick Dempsey. The Death of the Teen Movie was, shall we say, rather short-lived – a string of ineptly strangled critical carthage prompted, no doubt, by a high degree of wishful thinking

on the part of those rather woefully 'adult' pundits of contemporary cinema, with their often extremely middle-ground 'liberal' taste.

Of course, for fans of the 'genre' (a troublesome word, but we'll stick with it for the time being), the teen movie never died, and is scarcely about to roll over. Sure, the much-loved 'best pack' of the early to mid-1980s – the generation of Molly Ringwald, Emilio Estevez, Andrew McCarthy and Ally Sheedy – has moved on, albeit in some cases rather unusually, to adult parts, but another generation has quickly and unfailingly, according to the relentless and implacable logic of the market, taken its place (check out my issue of *Teen Dreams* or your newspaper for quick confirmation of this fact). In fact, there are always new 'mainstream' teen movies arising at the theatre – many of which go completely unreviewed and unnoticed by 'professional' newspaper film reviewers – including, recently, *Sling*, *First Wives*, *Myra Bane*, *Loversley* and *Senior Circle*; not to mention all the usual hybrids of the teen film with other profitable genres such as horror, sex & action, a territory too vast to cover in this article.

But there's a line more to consider than just mainstream releases. We must comprehend the formidable teen movie presence in virtually every other branch of the increasingly complex and diffuse culture industry we call 'the cinema'. First, how can one ignore, for instance, all the flaky 'arty' teen movies from Europe and Asia, many of them completely wip out, which make it to our more enlightened film festivals or art-house cinemas – Japanese wondrous like *The New Morning of Billy the Kid*, *So What?* and *The Twilight Club*, or Euro exotica like Chantal Akerman's *Golden Eyelids*, or even Romania's *Regimental Overfriendly*? Such films connect directly, and unashamedly, to the American 'pop' taste of say John Hughes or Rob Reiner: teen film you can't not name. Even the greater 'art' film, most closely resembling the classic Italian/art house bill of fare (like *8½* *Believer* Jean-Claude Brisson's *The Sound and the Fury*) tend to have a questionable strangeness or a Madonal intensity to them which is codically disconcerting to mild mannered, film-going film reviewers.

Second, how could an observer of local independent film ignore the conspicuous fact that a strikingly predominant number of films are



misrepresented? At the recent St. Kitts Film Festival, for instance, they staged all the way from characters of *The Incredible Girl and Passion* to the lo-jos of *Cheek* to the Corrales and Jacks *Use of Tin* to the '80s, as the introduction of *After Hours*. Third, there are the would-be 'cult' teen films, those glamorous film muses, which are re-chained by reputable cinema shortly after their early non-essential cinema release. *Penelope* (Sydney's) *Dudes*, William Richman's *A Night in the Life of Jimmy Reardon*, Sydney Launer's *Reasoning On Empty*.

Fourth – and most abundant of all – there are all those unknown teen wonders which slide into the video store unchallenged, under control, americana about virtually anywhere, just lately, that has included *Street Lovers*, *More Cloths*, *Permanent Record*, *The In Crowd*, *Alma Summer*, *Intimacy USA*, *School Days*, *Forever Land*, *Blackberry Hunt*, *Don't Tame on Planet Earth*, *Reverend* *There and There* (O'Clock High). Not all these films are masterpieces by any means, but all of them are interesting and exciting in myriad ways – and collectively, they suggest that, if young teens are indeed clearing the dust from their eyes, they're probably still getting their youth culture fix on their VCRs. I'd definitely propose that any serious film lover who has not completely rigor mortified into 'adult hood' should be pursuing that fix as well, along all possible lines of film culture.

OK. The time has come, in the case of the teen movie, to overcome a few misassessments, and settle a few scores. It's not just a problem of the newspaper reviewers, on their most subtle and influential stratum of the film culture sphere, ignoring the intricacies and achievements of the teen movie, the problem spreads right

through the middle sections (journals, contemporary magazines with selectively biased appeal like *American Film*, *Apple & Sand*, *Film Comment*, *Filmways* and *Cinema Future*, TV programs like *SBS' The Movie Show*), all the way to the specialist and academic spheres (magazines like *Framework*, *Mimeo*, *Cinema Obscura* and *Cineaste*, critical film programs on public radio). In every way, we will find that the teen movie is regularly either a completely ignored (either *Apple & Sand* or *Cinema Obscura* has devoted a single feature article to the phenomenon of the modern teen movie), or b) rhetorically dumped on as the odious 'noise' of contemporary commercial cinema, even 1980s mass culture generally. This position is tacitly reinforced (and never argued) every time a reviewer columns each and every film (say, Tim Hunter's *River's Edge*) as 'not your average teen movie', or laments that each and each a director (say, from Marklin Silver) has plummeted to making – *horror of horrors* – a 'teen flick' (Reich Connolly's *Intimate*

IT'S NOT JUST A PROBLEM OF THE NEWSPAPER REVIEWERS IGNORING THE INTERESTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TEEN MOVIE; THE PROBLEM SPREADS RIGHT THROUGH THE MIDDLE STRATUM... ALL THE WAY TO THE SPECIALIST AND ACADEMIC SPHERES.





ABOUT, TUCKY

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UNREMARKABLE CHARACTERS AND LADDER

JOHN WILLIAMS' SUPPORTING MUSIC

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series of abuse in the film columns of Melbourne's *The Herald*). More elaborately, this position is established when, every five years, a major magazine like *Film Comment*, *Screen* or even *Junior* devotes a few smart and feature pages to off-handedly dismissing the genre as bad art, and consigning it for its mature sociological and (academic, ironic, counter-culture, etc.) ¹

I should clarify two points in this early stage of my polemic. First, I am fully aware that the term 'teen movie' stretches a long way — far enough to include a certain kind of teen film which has no problem whatsoever generating praise from reviewers and audiences of polite middle ground tastes. If we take 'teen movie' to signify any film which deals with the drama or comedy of growing up in a specific social environment, then there are of course a flood of completely 'respectable' teen films which come to mind: *Summer of '68*, *My Life as a Dog*, *Breaking Away*, *Gogyer's Girl*, *A Summer Story*, *David in the Felt*... or indeed, just about any Australian teen film (even *Young Rascals* or *Wendy*) you care to name. *Mean* is a paradigm case: like the others mentioned, it is as a satirical or satiric mode, with a strongly specific 'sense of place', a genuine aesthetic, 'personal' (though its individualised, psychological characters), it is collective and serious.

Making necessary distinctions, we could say that *Mean*'s 'world view', as tone (like that of *My Darling*), is tough and contemporary, whereas those films in the *Summer of '68* vein are more 'romantic', wacky, whimsical, nostalgic, but still, I think, my teenage group: my bubble. Tough and tender, here, are two sides of the same nostalgic coin.

The next term in this how many people would instantly and unthinkingly call *Mean* or *My Life as a Dog* 'teen movies' — let alone 'teen flicks'. From experience, I

know that most people unthinkingly mean to separate and distinguish such 'personal' films from that tedious, intergeneric 'mass' of objects branded teen movies. (Down up, all those readers who choked when I cited that oh-so-scanner film *Rambling On* *Happy* above as a main example.) Well, that's the mass I'm talking about: everything from *Animal House* and *Porky's* to *Lucas* and *One Crazy Summer*, all those silly cultured films like *Secret Admirer*, *Jay of Sex*, *Just One of the Guys*, *Willy Mally*, *Summer Carnival*, *The Run Run Kid*, *Nice Girls Don't Explode*, *Tag! Tag!*, *Better Off Dead*, *The Legend of Billie Jean* and several hundred others, all at that video store near you. These are films which are, if not quite 'unrespectable' to all classes of viewers, at least conventional and formulaic, standard popular culture entertainment fare full of familiar plot and situation clichés, unoriginal character stereotypes, patently unreal fantasy worlds, and essentially accommodating of the dominant, patriarchal, capitalist ideology.

But I don't really want to divide and conquer here. *Mean*'s *Edgar* certainly a tough, complex, satirical, disturbing film which can — and should — be discussed extensively as a teen movie (I have certainly known two or three things about the form) and *David* is a flipped out, intense, thoroughly artificial film bursting with the contradictions of its too obvious borrowed genre, which can also be equally extensively discussed as a teen movie. I'm not resistant to including *Mean* in my critical system of the teen movie, I'm just heavily sick of all those who can't, or won't, include *Jay of Sex* there.

Secondly, I am not claiming that no one has ever written and/or

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anxiety or nervously about teen movies. You may have to look hard to find the good press – at the back of some of those ‘middle-stratum’ magazines, where the more passionate reviews and commentaries lurk, away from what can be a very small space (in *Cinema Papers* 1988-9) – but it does exist. Generally, though, I can’t help thinking that even the available defenses of the teen movie (or particular teen movies) fail to go far enough, and deeply through, on other subjects. And therefore as right to the heart of why the teen movie is such a ‘problem’ for film writing as it levels.

From my observations, teen movie defenses tend to be critics whose critical consciousness was distinctly formed either before or after the great explosion of 1970s film theory – writers who (in some considerable ways) are strongly ‘fixated’ or ‘lightened’ in their style of thought and their methodology, plus a few fervent defenders who scribbled for the open air once the theory machine got a little too shambly and claustrophobic, opening for the more modest and epigrammatic space of reviewing films for, say, *Monthly Film Bulletin*. Magazines that are still in some sense strongly, doggedly tied to Seventies methodology and style (like *Screen* and *Focus*) have never paid the slightest attention to the teen phenomenon, and perhaps never will.

However, the critical methodologies of the Sixties and Eighties are not necessarily much better when it comes to truly confronting the mass of teen movies. Is it enough, for instance, to want to talk out (Suzanne ‘film buff’ style) the meaning ‘mainstream’ of the genre, the undiscovered country, or the films that display a knowing reverence for traditional Hollywood forms? Granted, it would be no small achievement to see one-day first *Screen* reader’s *Day Off*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Koolhaas or Lights of Day* promoted to a canonical position on one of those periodical ‘greatest films of all time’ polls – remember, this is a world in which even a supposedly intelligent magazine like *Cineaste* regards *Ridhaas* as “too stupid to discuss”. And, to be fair, the teen movie has numerous authors, doing smart and evocative work within the form, who receive far too little serious attention. *Sophomore*, *Martha Coolidge*, *Hamer*, *Marisa Silver* – come to think of it, even author John Hughes has severely received his proper due in print. As for those especially knowing, that, overuse teen movies reviewed by bulls, those that can conjure a kind memory of the old Forties romantic comedies or the Fifties teen rebel melodramas ... I wouldn’t dispute that *Twins* and *The Sex Thing* (romance), or *At-Clare Ranges* and *Over the Edge* (rebellion) are worthy of some special attention somewhere down the line.

But artists enough? Turning to the more intellectual bulk of *Cineaste* or *Movie* magazines – those who have absorbed something of the Seventies theory revolution into their own politicized methodology of ‘political criticism’ – we find a slightly more sophisticated take in relation to the teen movie. Still more or less on the track of especially ‘significant’ films and ‘intelligent’ directors, critics like Robin Wood (in his book *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*) propose new criteria of value: the teen movie is to be measured not now those that somehow ‘subvert’, or at least give a strong critical insight into, the dominant ideology. Thus, *Italy* becomes producers a critique of the capitalist success story, *The Wanderers* reflects the experience of ordinary Americans slowly becoming politicized on the eve of the Vietnam era, and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (in Wood’s account) “construct[s] a position for the female spectator that is neither masculinist nor merely complacent”.²

I’m not dissatisfied for all this diligent retrieval of especially good and interesting teen movies – by both political and apolitical – something still remains richly condoned off, and it is precisely that despised ‘mass’ of anonymous teen movies. There are all plenty of films that no one, it seems, wants to talk about. Think of it – discovering misperceptions or omissions, isolating ‘subversive’ or mass-grade examples: isn’t such critical pursuit, at some level, fairly

ways of negotiating, once again, the supposedly ‘good’ from the supposedly ‘bad’, the ‘political’ from the ‘normal’, and ‘art’ (intelligence) from ‘them’ (the mass audience)? Even teen movie fans tend to proceed via a put-down of ‘the teen movie’ as such – the common discourse teen movie, as it were – in order to then establish what teen will above that ‘norm’. It is rare – in fact startling – when Dennis Wood, almost alone amongst writers on the teen movie, grants a film (in his case *Carrie* [Summer]) precisely because it is ‘normal’, average, unexceptional, because it is, as he puts it, “as and on the beach”.³

It is a little disappointing, really, that film criticism – even praised, half, movie-loving criticism – has got as so little of the way in understanding the anatomy of cinema. What especially loses out, of course, is what is known as ‘popular’ cinema – all that stand on the beach. This is a surprising fact when you consider the strong ‘popular’ impulse that was doubtless at the origin of so many genre-based and narrative projects of the Fifties and Sixties (from *Catfish* to *Miami*) – the impulse to encounter and understand, in a way, all the energy and savvy of the popular are like Hollywood cinema and pop music, forms that were all pervasive but conspicuously lacking from the official histories and theories of art and aesthetics. This urgency



impulse is clearly testified to by Peter Wollen when, in recently looking back on his 1968 book *Signs and Meanings in the Cinema* that moved mostly on the edge of old and new methodological film criticism, he remarks that the book uncovered a way of “unraveling the Hollywood cinema in depth”, an engagement with ‘popular art theory’ that was “a genuine advance”.⁴

But the record suggests that Wollen, then as now (like so many others), is looking himself. His writers of his period (such as Raymond Bellour or Laura Mulvey) quickly migrated from the messy depths of cinema to the more familiar and manageable surfaces. Valuable general theoretical points about cinema and culture were made during the Seventies, but only, primarily, through the study of the preferred manner (like Hitchcock), the ‘transgressive’ films (like *Twang My Love*) and the especially glamorous genres (like film noir). Cinema critic Serge Daney, in the late Seventies, was rather candid about this shift: “We wanted to go mad Ford, say Huxley, to dissect Breton and not René Clair, to psychoanalyze Buñuel and not Pabst”.⁵ This indicates that critics were unconsciously setting

The TEEN Movie

rather strict limits—limits deriving, fundamentally, from their "teen"—on what they were willing to do (or "accepting" enough to spend time analyzing).

The same process happens today, and the teen movie is one of its purest victims. Those, which evoke out the previous, quickly flee the scene. This is why, in many ways, the study of popular cinema (or at least the type of study which starts out from the films themselves) has advanced so little since the 1960s, why, for instance, most academic studies of the horror genre never get past the same shallow pool of "grotesque" film-makers and "typical" roles. Even an exceptional writer like Andrew Sarris (from the *Cineaste*/*Movie* camp) abandons any potential for a complex and sophisticated "popular", in-depth understanding of commercial cinema when he leaps, every time, for the superior critical "value" of a Hitchcock, Bresson or Mankiewicz over the run-of-the-mill, commercial-bound, ideologically determined Hollywood product.

However, there's one last option. One might think that all this careful "holiness" on the part of critics has been eroded by the sudden return (promoted in the *Epitaphs* of a certain "sociopsychiatric" kind of writing devoted purely to the "popular" genres—horrorists like, locally, *Fatal Visions*, or books like Kim Newman's *Nightmare Movies* [reviewed in *Cinema Papers* 74]), but this did not hesitate to come to the whole ground of their chosen topics. But, while the informative value of such work is beyond dispute, and has only to peruse the brutally "academic" judgements of Newman's book—the all too certain idealization of all that is apparently self-evidently "bad" in cinema, such as directors who can't direct, scripts that have no back bone, ideas that just don't work or films that can't get themselves together—to know that, for a new generation of B movie buffs, the definition of "artistic" has really shrunk to little more than what it has always been for the worst of the newspaper hacks: an intrinsic superiority, the power to bless what is comfortably good and damn what is uncomfortably bad.

What is thereby lost in such criticism is any notion of the cinema— even and especially popular cinema— as a place where risks can be taken, where experiments (sometimes involuntarily) happen, and where thinking on cinematic occasions between viewers and films should (and *has*) occur. Again, this is disappointing and inspiring in the light of the thought that B cinema, so often beyond the pale, mediocre and surprising, surely demands and inspires a critical approach that can break free from the protocols imposed by the ideal of a "form".

Besides, the new-wave fanatics are scarcely likely to sustain much contact with the divided teen movie. That is because, just as at the academic level, only certain genres are considered outside as total—in a "acceptable" no case. In the *Epitaphs* (see Michael Harkin's report in *Cinema Papers* 73), it's only the "dirty" genres which ever really matter. Thus, while it's par for the course for these unscrupulous publications to exist the series, perverse delight of *Mutant Cop*, *The Middleman Screw Truck* (and I shame them for it), I can't imagine that modest, rather wholesome little teen film like *Snow Machine* in *Harvey*, *Crazy For You* or *Pretty In Pink* are ever quite going to get the same nod of subcultural approval. The teen genre is now "clean" by half—a standard objection lodged on all the critical scene, from *Sexscape* Party's Philippe Royan scoffing that "these youths, clean and anapestic, immaculately untroubled by the great crises of contemporary America, are completely ignorant of Warburg and Vietnam" (This predictable crack

in the massive "unrealism" of the teen movie usually burns along with "these kids never do anything at work", "there are no gays in teen movies" and "all the adults are caricatures".)

In a nutshell, you could say the form has virtually nothing going for it that would command it as worthy of the attention of your average critic. Any type of cinema and a slice of culture, it is largely conservative and conventional, often better with its link direct to the real world, and is essentially content to simply amuse its audience. It is not particularly postmodern (only insofar as everything these days logically must be), in fact, it is unquestionably the daggon, the nerdish, the most whorish of genres. It may be a reduced "utopian" impulse in comparison with the most flawed, and most critically prized, mainstream musicals or melodramas.

So why bother? Here are the reasons why I would choose to study the teen movie, from *American Graffiti* to *Big Anything*.

1. *It exists, it's popular* So called "youth culture", within which the teen movie sits, is a big, important deal. The culture is not just (as it is too often deluged) "things (films, records...) pushed at kids", it's also Bill Murray and Purple Rain and Dee Dee Herman and rock 'n' roll—something that gives you (no matter your actual age) that "kick" which is half "transcend" (rebellion, vulgarity) and half innocence (optimism, idealism). It's just too easy to waste points by diagnosing the progressive "juvenescence" of popular culture (as Thomas Cushman does in his otherwise useful book *Teenage and Tripping*), while not grasping that at least half our total culture, now more than ever, is





AN
INTERVIEW
WITH
CRAIG
MONAHAN



a n i m

CONDUCTED BY PAUL HARRIS, CHRIS BROPHY AND GEOFFREY GARDNER



CRAIG MONAHAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY NESTY MCGOWAN



LEFT: DAVID ANDERSON /
COMPUTER ANIMATION THE HOUSE
[TOP]: HOUSE AT DUNDUNG

ated

THE AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY has for close to two decades occupied a respectable cultural position. Production has become, within certain limits, quite stable. This can hardly be said, however, about the animation sector. Since 1913, when the first Australian animation was done by Harry Julius, through to the present, the animator's lot has been one of shoddy production standards, overweening domination, lack of audience interest and a failure to have the art of the animated film taken seriously by the wider industry.

There have been some examples: Bruce Petty's *Owen* for Lowrey, Yoram Gross's making the international market on his own terms and finally getting the Australian firms up against the Northern Hemisphere children, ducks, mice, dogs and so on, and the Swanburne Film School's using its recent state-of-the-art equipment to churn out a bewildering collection of new films. But these ventures tend to pale away alongside the sales of woe, the shoddy projects, the scenes never taken up and the films that simply never get shown.

Nevertheless, there is a remarkable story to tell about all those who hustled away in their poorly equipped studios, or simply on their own. And the threads of this tale have been pieced together by Craig Monahan, a Film, Radio and Television School graduate and former producer of SBS's *Radi Australia* World. He spent two years on the research and uncovered people such as the Owen brothers and Harry Julius, who had long been forgotten, and went through to the present where animation is taking on a new lease of life via the computer and the rock clip. Filming and editing took a further year.

The result is *Animated*, a film in which 75 years of animation history is rolled into 80 breathless minutes. The film adopts an engagingly flimsy, slightly whimsical, unconvincingly off-the-wall approach to the assembly of the material, eschewing the conventional history/archival concept. It runs from 1913, when cartoons were done to cement an unusual material, past Eric Porter, the Owen brothers, Bruce Petty, Yoram Gross and Alex Stott, and on to the present of Steve French, Bruce Clarke and the computer video groups. It has lots of Australian animals, though one may have trouble accepting Willie as a wombat. All in all it is a singular contribution to revising some moments of Australian history which lay buried even deeper than most.

QUESTION: Have you always been interested in animation?

CRAG MONAHAN: Yes, though I never wanted to be an animator. But it seemed to me you could do anything in animation if you had the the imagination.

I grew up with *The Bugs Bunny Show*, *The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons* and then *style of television*. I was lucky to grow up with

Neighbours, *Perfect Match*, *Homes and Away* and other such programs, which bred so called normality but really inspire mediocrity.

To the animator and the fan, animation is close to music and poetry. You can do things that you couldn't possibly get away with in live action, both in style and content. You can comment or satirise without necessarily offending anyone, while at the same time making people most aware. In *Animated*, for instance, you see an incredible variety of styles and subject matter, all of which reflect the many changes in our political and social attitudes.

Despite this, animation is still seen as a bit of a novelty - particularly in Australia, where animation is judged on how it compares to Disney. In Europe and Canada it is considered an art form, and even in Australia people have broken with the Disney style and been accepted. For example, in cinema today we are seeing the 'cartoon movie' by that I mean the filmmaking quality. *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Ghostbusters*, *Backspace* and *Batman*, which I can't wait to see.

QUESTION: How did you approach making a film about animation in Australia?

CM: I didn't really want to do a purely archival film, with a presenter. I wanted to try and make a film which was much more layered. I conceived it on three levels. The first was the animation itself. Then came the filmmakers as individuals and, third, the group of animators I compared to "the band". That was a joke. We set the camera up on tracks about 10 meters away and let them eat, drink and be merry. It was great fun and quite revealing.

QUESTION: There is an interesting comment in the film from Ann Jelliffe, when she says that she has never been in a room with more than three animators. It is a pretty solitary profession fiddling away with drawings, clay, paper, etc, nowadays, a companion.

CM: A lot of the animators have this bizarre feel to them. They are very quiet. I thought if we could get that quality on camera it would be good. One of the things that comes across is that they are quite normal people.

QUESTION: Were you at all dismayed by the amount of research that fixed you the drawing of eyes, hunting for footage and so on?

CM: No, because I was very interested in the subject and very keen to make a film. I had been following in music video and commercials for too long. For every time I tried to get a film off the ground, I didn't have much success. So, I decided to start doing the research myself. Then other people became interested and the whole thing just gathered momentum.

QUESTION: Did you discover much material that you didn't know existed?

CM: Yes. I wasn't really aware of the Owen Brothers, or of Pat Sullivan's relationship to Felix the Cat. And I certainly wasn't aware of



animated

Harry Julius or that Lloyd Jones used to work for him.

Bill Collins says in the film that the chances of the early animators' work being seen or exhibited in a fair and proper manner were very slim. He's right, because of the cobwebs and disaffection cartels in the way and the fact that it was basically a hobby for these people. There was no way that anybody could make a living purely from animation. All of them had to do something else. The Owen brothers, for example, did roles for other newspapers or films, and also ran a graphic design studio. More or less it is the same today.

Many of the great animators and illustrators of the time worked for Smith and Johnson studios in some shape or other. The Johnsons made, for instance, used to do a lot of illustrations for *The Bulletin* and *Smith's Weekly*. And if the people weren't working directly for the newspaper, they would be working for Julius. He used to do ads for newspapers as well.

I love the way newspaper cartoonists can turn up 1,000 years, or what happened yesterday afternoon, in one drawing and caption. I think that animation on television could be used in the same way. At the end of my film, I raise the question of why animation isn't used more for analysis on television, like it is with newspapers. Given Bruce Petty's work, and *Rabbits Run*, it is more than possible.

QUESTION: Another discovery for you was Dick Grenson, who did *King Billy*.

CAJ: Few people know anything about him. He worked for the Shell Company, and also did the odd illustration. He used to sell his paintings at the house once on a Sunday morning. Apart from *King Billy*, the only other animation he did was a couple of shorter things. It was much more of a hobby for him than the Owen brothers and people like them. His style is especially good for Australia at that time (c. 1933).

QUESTION: What was the reaction from the old animators when you began hunting for this material?

CAJ: Most people thought the film would be a waste of time because they had no idea that there had ever been an animation industry. A few people were very co-operative, but most didn't know where I could start.

Initially, most of the information came from my interviews with past and present animators. After then, the *Australian Film Institute* and *Australian Film Commission* occurred through their list of films and filmmakers, and I used this information to get hold of newspaper material. Once I put together a coherent list, I contacted the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA).

The NFSA was able to put me onto some Harry Julius material. It was part of the news reel of the day, the *Australian Gazette*. There are dozens of those in the NFSA, but they have only been able to preserve or copy a few. It's all ironic. It was a bit disappointing that the only ones I could get of Harry Julius were the ones or five that had been preserved. There are many more waiting to be done, when money becomes available.

QUESTION: Was there any material you couldn't use because of copyright problems?

CAJ: The *Battle* was one. A few of the episodes of the TV series were done in Australia in the early Sixties. But we couldn't use them because it would have cost too much money. As well, several American series from the Sixties, such as *Carl McCard*, *Boots Backyard*, *Kenny Koi*, are owned by King Features, which would only let us use stills.

QUESTION: Was a series like *The Battle* really Australian?

CAJ: Well, the scripts and voice tracks came from America. But the stories, and often like it, did foster and raise a new generation of animators.

On the other hand, the introduction of television to Australia was us start to lose some of our national identity. We were tempted to ignore our own surroundings and there were subtle changes in our lives. I don't think it is anything new to say that Australian television is a vehicle for cultural imperialism, whatever you may think of the quality of some of it.

Before television, our animators used a tremendous amount of the Australian flora and fauna, even if people followed the Disney style. At least they were drawing wattle, kookas, kangaroos and so on. But after television, when the cartoon could purchase US and UK product for a fraction of the cost of local material, we had to listen to American rabbits. I wasn't until *Baron Green* in the 1970s that we got the return of Australian characters.

QUESTION: There is a tale at one point which reads 'Hanna Barbera 1972-1988'.

CAJ: Disney has bought Hanna Barbera Australia. It doesn't have an animation studio in America. The only one it owns now is here. They are making things like *Winnie The Pooh*. All the layouts and boarding



➤ *Review*
by
Liz
Jacka

Feast of Edens

EDENS LOST:
AN ANTIPODEAN
BRIDESHEAD,
A BLUE MOUNTAINS
DYNASTY, OR
ART TELEVISION?

EDENS LOST is one of the finer of the classy co-produced mini-series to emerge from Sandra Levy's revamped drama policy at the ABC, although it sits along pre-ABC genres. The project originated with producer Margaret Pask, and there is the usual story of a long gestation (period, difficulty in finding funding, and the ordeal goes through to bring this "masterpiece to the screen") (cf. *My Brilliant Career* and *For Love Alone*). It was co-production between the ABC, Margaret Pask, and Central Independent Television of the UK – for the latter, the first production from its newly formed film arm to reach the screen.

Unlike most Australian mini-series, *Edens Lost* is carefully positioned at the high cultural end of the market; it deliberately proposes itself as what John Coaglie has called "art television".¹ It was publicised both here and in the UK as a prestige production, its subcommittee was described as the "new-edged" sexual and emotional conflicts of an "elitist" upper class family, providing beautiful images, stylish settings, lovely clothes and intense dialogue. The genre from Britain's *Three Derwentwaters*, quoted in the ABC's press kit, is typical: "High class three-hour British/Australian adaptation of Sumner Locke Elliott's novel of class, class and college. Perfectly paced, stunningly shot and consistently compelling... mini-series don't come much better than this." And as another extract from the press kit reminds us, with its "7.1 million viewers – *Brideshead Revisited* 3.25 million viewers", comparisons with the landmark production of Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* are inevitable.

There are a number of parallels: both are adaptations of well-regarded novels, both are stories about the privileged classes from the point of view of one from humble origins, although, unlike the innocents of *Brideshead*, the St. James family is already well-off upper middle-class. Both are about the elegant facade of a family being broken down and revealing the conflicts, hatred and downmarket psychology that exists within, both have gloriously beautiful locations as central characters, both have rather gorgeous lower class male protagonists who provide the voyeuristic identification point for the audience, and who, paradoxically, are the

BEFORE: PHOTOS ABOVE LEFT/RIGHT
TO RIGHT BY EVA ST. JAMES (PASKA PLAYS)
TO RIGHT BY EVA ST. JAMES (PASKA PLAYS)
BEFORE: PHOTOS ABOVE LEFT/RIGHT
TO RIGHT BY EVA ST. JAMES (PASKA PLAYS)
BEFORE: PHOTOS ABOVE LEFT/RIGHT
TO RIGHT BY EVA ST. JAMES (PASKA PLAYS)



witnesses and accomplices of the family secret. Both explore an audience's fascination for peering at the upper classes and their strange, perverse ways, both offer the delightful luxury of exploring dark and alluring skeletons in cupboards. And both depend on a narrative for the loss of time: more leisureed, more elegant, more measured, even if fatally flawed. Everything about the style of both – the legendary language of *Bushwhacker*, the loving preoccupation with decor, settings, clothes, the steady pace and vaguely Deleuzian means in *Eden Lost* – is elegant, has a slightly better, yet somehow comfortable, even sentimental sense of rhythm, and for the loss of time never quite caused.

Margaret Peck has specialised in bringing Australian classic novels to the screen, first Miles Franklin, then Christina Stead, and her next project is said to be Jessica Anderson's *Terraviva By The River*. Although a producer for television, *Eden Lost* has a definite cinematic *Boswell* about it. As Craigie defines

BEING LOST IS CERTAINLY UNLIKE ANY OTHER MINI-SERIES MADE IN AUSTRALIA ... IT REMINDS US OF CINEMA IN ITS HEAD-ON EMOTIONAL TONE, ITS AT TIMES SOMEWHAT OTTOMAN NARRATIVE EXPOSITION ... AND WITH MUCH OF THE CONTENT BEING CONVEYED THROUGH MISS-ON-SCENE DEVICES RATHER THAN DIRECTLY.

It, in television is precisely that: a series of high quality TV dramas in which the visual rhetoric of cinema dominates, rather than the script dominated rhetoric of television. *Eden Lost* is certainly unlike any other mini-series made in Australia, both in subject matter and in style. It does not have the rather linear historical narrative style that characterises the same sector: it resembles an cinema in its bold back emotional style, its at times somewhat OTTOMAN narrative exposition, the fact that it is entirely an 'internal' piece, based solely on inner

psychological explanation (though with the occasional melodramatic do as machines to participate psychological development, e.g. the killing of Ciole's dog), and with much of the content being conveyed through more on-scene devices rather than directly.

The question for a critic then is how to 'read' *Eden Lost*. Is it art television, is it melodrama, is it high quality soap? What do we make of this arid production of a story of a spoiled middle class family and its agonies and tragedies during the years of the Second World War?

In some ways, the answer to the question must be: it is unapproach to the novel which is the source material. It is surely interesting to note how often Suzanne Locke Tillam has been adapted for the screen, compared with other Australian authors. The current series follows the 1980 mini-series of Tillam's 1977 novel

Water Under the Bridge and the 1982 feature version of *Careful, Mr Maple River You* (first published 1964). *Eden Lost* was first conceived to be the continuation of the autobiographical themes begun in *Careful*. In *Eden Lost* the young P & of *Careful* is replaced by a version of the author's persona in the character of Angus (Jesse Hughes), the young man left homeless and alone after his Aunt's death, and moved with a maidservant, "Come to us" and the family by the alluring and mysterious Eric St James (John Blake).

DAVID WHITE AND GAILLE
DUNN (AKA FORWARD WILEY)
FOR WHICH SHE LEARNED
HER HUSBAND,
TAYLOR HARRIS,
AN IDEAL HUSBAND.



The screen adaptation follows the structure of the novel fairly faithfully, like the novel it is structured into three quasi-autonomous parts, entitled 'Angus', 'Eve' and 'Eve' after the character from whose point of view each is told. However, in the novel there are digresses both of viewpoint and thematic incident between parts which give it a slightly more fluid of scenes and layers of memory. In the past we are given one fragment of an incident: for example, Steve's role on the 'famine' with Angus (in Part 1) whose full import is only revealed when it is re-remembered in Part 3.

It is a mixture of scenes and a more modernist use of figures – it has something of the formal monologic structure familiar from Woolf or the *Joyce* of *Parnassus* or the *Anna* as a Young Man, notably in Eliot's habit of retelling scenes in real sentence as a memory which up in the consciousness of the character whose 'voice' is currently carrying the narrative.

A good deal of the strangeness of the novel has been worn out by not preserving these striking juxtapositions – only Rod's culminating narrative of her killing in love with Heath is handled in a way that juxtaposes past and present, but that is done by way of the more normal and accustomed flashback technique, with the past being conveniently clearly marked for us by being photographed in the pseudo-romantic sepia style of the times.

The first part of *Below Zero* tells the story of Angus's introduction to the St James family, and his initiation with the son of Sir St James. Eve tells Angus the story of the judge's disgrace which has led to the family's isolation in the Blue Mountains and to the judge's distant state, where the family honour has been preserved by a series of court cases and literary games in which Heath (Arthur Duggan) can again play out a kind of parody of his former judicial power. The family members are introduced: Steve (Lynda Cooper), the eldest daughter, beautiful, spoilt, contemporary, like, with a vicious tongue, Ben (Victor Longley), the second daughter, less beautiful, large, clever and too bright for her own good, and Tip (Vera Secombe), the son, ostentatiously courting the unfamiliar Lady Ann (Melanie Lynskey) but also conducting a secret affair with Lind (Fiona Press), the Austrian maid, and even less beautiful than Lind and to the family conspiracy to preserve Heath's disfigurement. Finally, there are two significant hangers-on: Cassie (Jennifer Clunie), Eve's old friend, the ex-Rosemary Girl, who, like all Eve's other who and steps, has been collected and brought into the family, and who is part of a strange reversed relationship whose surface structure conceals who is really dependent on whom, and Marcus (Philip Sawyer) the sexually ambiguous and exquisitely sensitive hotel manager, who is turned out (rather unpleasantly) as Steve's one true love and the main mother of her subsequent marriage work.

The structure of Episode 1 is the most melodramatic, Cassie and Angus being the key figures. Like all outsiders on such scenes, Angus becomes the ear to everyone's secrets, and after Cassie confesses to him

that she had a brief but non-sexual liaison with Heath at the time of his disgrace, Angus accidentally lets this information fall in front of Eve. This is the first major crack in the structure, Eve's life long work of facing the perfect wife, of devoting herself to fulfilling Heath's every desire, is abruptly called into question, and in revenge Eve sends Cassie's beloved dog to be put down. Only Angus knows the reason, and it preoccupies his disquietment with the funeral of the St James family's perfection and his descent into cynical and sponging mediocrity, although in subsequent parts we can never quite separate himself from the family. Angus starts as the scheming, goggle-eyed voyeur, and ends up in Episode 3 as the witness and interpreter of the final disintegration of the family, or rather of the family mansion.

Episode Two is Rod's story, and occurs in Sydney at the end of the War. Ben once a successful writer of radio soap operas, pen-name D.K. (for 'don't know') Dorian. Shattered by a battle fight with Marcus, she has a brief affair with a visiting US officer, Corey Orman (Patrick Quane), urban, sensitive and, unfortunately for her, another failed. This Episode also updates us on Steve's situation: now married to the dull master of Episode 1, Bill Bernard (Andrew Tipler), conventionally posted overseas, and the mother of a daughter, Steve is having an affair with a wealthy but boring US army major, Gilbert Innes (Ed Wiley).

We also meet up again with Angus, now prosperous and precariously middle aged, who has teamed up with Lady Ann, and is planning to go missing in the Northern Territory. Again, it is Angus who unwittingly plays the role of a character of family disfigurement, by revealing to his wife the reason why Eve had Cassie's dog destroyed.

But the episode belongs to Ben. Two major incidents structure it: the first is the phone conversation with Eve after her fight with Marcus, in which he does her usual trick of refusing to hear anyone's (other than Heath's) mood or desire, the second is the night Ben finally spends with his US Captain in which, knowing already it will fall on deaf ears, she declares her love for him, saying "nobody around me has ever said exactly what they mean and I've never said exactly what I mean and there's got to be one time when you do, otherwise what's it all for?" This Episode ends with Ben suggesting out of the hotel into the street, with the words of the hotel manager ringing in her ears, "Don't ever show your face here again!", and finding the way has ended and that the street is full of what is for Ben endless repeating, dancing and kissing. Ben hurries up the street, with his gapping wife, apparently as startled

BEING EYE CAN BE SEEN AS A STORY OF THE
UNRELIABILITY OF IMAGE DESIGN, AND THE
IMAGINERY OF THE WOMEN EVEN TO ARTICULATE
THIS DESIGN. FOR ALL THREE OF THE CENTRAL
WOMEN CHARACTERS, EVE, STEVE AND ANN,
THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF BEING SHOWN...

publication, although really, as we know, is wordless grief for the love, and all love, permanently lost. The soundtrack of cheering drown-out any utterance of loss.

If Episode 1 is the most gothic and melodramatic in structure and tone and Episode 2 the most surrealistic, the third is the most concentrated and formally rigorous. Apart from an early passage comprised of a number of quick short scenes which establish the roots in history of the main characters, all of it consists of a couple of long sequences, the first of which explores Reeve's current state of mind, and the second of which is a long monologue in which Eve finally explains her marriage, her family and herself to the ubiquitous women, Angas. The Episode is set after the war. Heath has died, Reeve has abandoned husband and daughter to marry Gabriel Lane and has taken up residence with him in a stately and luxurious Long Island mansion, where Eve is on a long visit, the purpose of which is undoubtedly to help patch up a failing marriage. Eve, as usual, is too frozen in her own detached self-conservation to help in any way. Reeve is depicted as a personally distressed, peculiar child (she calls Gabriel "daddy" just as Eve has previously so addressed Heath), conspicuous and bitchy as ever, until one night during Reeve's Gabriel explains, "Sophisticate—just tell me what you want" (shades of Freud's famous "What do women want?") and departs the mansion for ever. Eve decides to make a hasty departure now that things have become messy, and when Angas rounds on her and accuses her of being cold and unfeeling, Eve finally cracks on telling her story. "I must tell you about Heath & James."

Summer Locke: Elinor is a strangely anachronistic author. He has

lived in New York for more than 40 years; the novel, published from there in 1968 at the height of Black Power, Women's Liberation, the hippie movement and the "sexual revolution", has the feel and style of something written much closer to the time of its writing—the 1930s and 1940s. It's as if Elinor, in writing about a place he has not seen for 30 years, can only conceptualize it as it was then, and oddly the style of writing and tone and sensibility of the novel are fixed in that time too. Since the series is largely such a faithful adaptation of the novel (with a few small but significant differences), it raises the same problem for a critic offshore to position oneself vis-à-vis a commentary on it. In some ways it is almost as anachronistic as, say, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, which, in its film adaptation, was made so deliberately, sharply and pointedly contemporary, in spite of its exquisitely authentic costumes and settings. Is it appropriate to take *Ebony* too seriously as a critical object, or better simply to dismiss it as high class soap-opera, or to credit it in the superficial way the critics and publishers did, as being simply a slightly offbeat look at upper middle-class perversion (as in the film *Moulin Rouge* showing room antics of the Millonnière suite)?

In spite of the series definitely proposing itself in both of these ways, I believe that on balance, it is possible to see something more interesting and more contemporary than that in it. The following reading of *Ebony* Last does depend on a supplementation of the television one by a reading of the novel, as the television version certainly themes more fully developed in the novel remain latent and barely hinted at, and the complexity of relationships is not sufficient to fill the gap left by even narration. This leaves the television one at times

either cryptic and ultimately empty. In particular, Eve's crucial final monologue has the feeling of amnesia about it—a feeling on the audience of, "See What", when it should be both the explanation and the culmination of the tragedy that has gone before.

THE FEMININE / HYSTERIC / SILENCE

Since there is no doubt that hysteria has a strong affinity with femininity, just as obscenescence has with masculinity, it appears probable that, as a determinant of identity, but of love plays much the same part as desire as the threat of castration does in phallos and thus of the super ego in obscenescence, anxiety.

PHOBIA, (IN)SECURITY, SYMPTOMS AND ANXIETY, IN VOL. 2 OF L'AMANTISSIMA

We might say that the Absolute Woman, as culture, the woman who really represents femininity more effectively—who is closer to femininity in prey to sexual lust, is usually the hysteric: he makes her image for her? The hysteric is a dreamt spirit that is always at the edge, the turning point of making. She is one who does not make herself... The hysteric "makes" believe" the father...



Without the hysterical there's no father... She is given images that don't belong to her, and she loses herself, as we've all done, to invisible things.
 JULIAN GORDON, "DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATION," *Screen*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1982, p. 67

Eden Lane is a woman's picture, in several senses. It is a film of women characters—even though Angus is in some sense the central character as a structural issue because of his role as catalyst/witness /interpreter for the series (logos and made in a circular movement (characteristic of the woman's film¹), the circle closed by the repetition of Angus's first meeting with Eve, and her maternalist avowal, "Come to us." But it is the women who are central to the symbolic level of the narrative (pre-eminently Eve, the mother, the archetypal eternal feminine, then the daughters, Steve and Bea, the all-important Claire, and Lesley Ann Heath, the father, the judge, should be the patriarchal center of the narrative, and of course biologically he is his primary role, because it is Eve's organically pathological relationship to Heath that is supposed to explain the family saga, and to account for all the pathology which follows. But like the cockily narcissistic patriarch of *Mist On A String*, Heath is a failed patriarch, he has in some sense lost the power of controlling speech since he has been dislodged from his public role as judge, and he is suffering from some sort of mysterious psychotic condition (manic-depression?). All the other men in the narrative are either cosmic buffoons (Graham Drake, Bill Seward) or mother-fixated and thus emotionally crippled (Covey O'Sullivan) or hidden behind a paternal mask which distances him from emotional involvement (Maurice).

Eden Lane can be seen as a story of the unsatisfiability of female desire, and the inability of the women ever to transcend this desire. For all three of the central women characters, Eve, Steve and Bea, there is the problem of being off-center—Eve by Heath's unspoken prohibitions and desire for a screen on which to project her own desire, Steve by the fact that she appears to be constantly speaking in a language no one can understand, and Bea by the constraints of the familial and societal frame on female expression.

Eve can only succeed in her desperate bid to seize Heath for a husband by literally consuming him. She wins Heath from her mind, the "pretty vicious girl" by betraying no hint of emotion or demand.

"Without Steve is the mark of hysteria—what tells me's heard because it's the body that talks, and men don't hear the body."
 CLAUDE, *OP. CIT.*, p. 40

Eve's interpretation of Heath's desire has made her into a creature of noise, unable to use anybody or anything except her own image which, putting herself in Heath's place, she constantly adores. In her final monologue Eve explains: "I became neurally by degrees, I became all props, I watched myself become a prophyry around his edges, I sat as coal as stone..." In Episode 3 Eve is constantly shown gazing into mirrors, and admiring herself, there is the extraordinary scene in the aeroplane toilet where she looks in the mirror and laughs almost in ecstasy. In the TV version this is felt as an act of pure narcissism, in the novel it is accompanied by an interior monologue which refers to her "fading of appalling sensations and joy at being remembered, wanted... rescued from the dead." Eve constantly performs herself in perfect control of every movement, every desire, even when alone, as in the scene of Episode 3 where she slowly dresses for dinner in a white wool dress. The camera appears to close up the putting on of the earrings, the belt, the brooch, each action performed with the measured perfection of a strange ritual.

Steve's hysteria is to demand too much, to drink too much, to let her vicious tongue run on and on, to destroy people and things, so Steve is in a sense too noisy, but she too is never heard. At the end of Episode 3, she says almost the only real things she's said in the whole

series, to Angus's bailiffment she says "Of course you don't get the point, nobody ever gets the point; no one has ever got that point of me."

Bea's hysteria is to retreat into the fantasy world of her soap opera, of imagined desires and danger in strange exotic places. When she actually falls in love with Covey her soap opera imagination runs up, she cannot sustain the fantasy. When Covey leaves she roars the streets during the Victory Celebration with her scum or agonized face looking up (towards the center in the sky), her mouth gaping with a repeated word that is drowned out by the sound of the celebration but which the novel reveals as "Nothing. Nothing."

THE MOTHER / THE ABANDONED CHILD / BORN LOSE

The attitude to women in *Eden Lane* is highly ambivalent: on the one hand the women characters are the most interesting, the most beautiful, they are admired for their style, wit, sensibility, their inability to structure their desire or find fulfillment with their loved men is explored sympathetically. On the other hand, the original sin of the whole story is a failure of mothering, *Eden Lane* is full of bad mothers. Eve is the ultimate bad mother: she at once abandons her children to devote herself to her great life's work—the (f)becoming Heath's widow, the children totally refuse to help preserve Heath's illusory world. Eve's tragedy is supposed to be that this great project was entirely misguided, Heath looks her straight in the eye as he is dying and says to her with his last breath, "Not you." Steve is also a bad mother: she abandons her own daughter, Miranda, to follow her lover to America—but Steve, as Angus explains to us, is to be understood, if not forgiven, because she herself has suffered from bad mothering. Bea continuously attempts both to obtain mothering from Eve and to mother her; when Claire leaves, she goes to her mother, "Never mind" said Eve, with her most engaging look, says, "Never mind what?" And Bea has the misfortune to fall in love with a mother fixated man, a man so attached to mother that he is unavailable for any other attachment.

The less-developed character of Tip, the son, also has a particular relation to the mother. He abandons Lesley Ann and the family values and morality to marry, for earthliness, the perfect American Hausfrau-mother, Carol, who proceeds to stuff him full of dumplings and strouds. Significantly, Angus is the only character who is motherless (even Lesley Ann has a mother who, Comic Book, has a drinking problem), having lost his own mother at birth he has never known one: the having no mother is not much better than having a bad one. So for Summer Locke Wilson, are the things that are lost the perfect union with the mother, ever sought but never found? And what do we make of the tag on the novel (quoted in the TV version):

"Where the apple robbins
 Never go,
 Lost we live our Edens,
 Too and I."

ROBERT BROWNING, *A WINDY LAST WORD*

NOTES

- John Gimples, "Historical Fictions and Art Telephones," *Screen*, Volume 11, No. 6, 1981, pp. 9-21.
- See Tessa Modak, "Class and Desire in the Woman's Film," *Cinema Journal*, 18 No. 3, Spring 1984, p. 32.

EDEN LANE directed by Neil Armfield. Producer: Margaret Flett. Script: Richard Goss. Executive producers: Baudouin Luyt (ABC), Ted Childs (Coral). Photography: Geoffrey Swenson. Editors: Jeff Brown. Composer: Alan John. Cast: John Blain (Heath), Adrian Dingle (Heath Lynde-Covey Moore), Victoria Longley (Eve), Jennifer Clancy (Carol), Brett Higgins (Angus), Margaret Johnson (Lesley Ann), Patrick Ryan (Bill), Tim Connolly (Tip), Andrew Tait (Bill Seward), Philip Sayer (Maurice), Fiona Quinn (Covey), Ed Wiley (Graham).

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But if the lofty Twenties
space suggests anything,
it's an art gallery or a reser-
gode ad agency.
Keith Haring and German

ROCK DREAMS

Expressionist posters
decorate the walls. And
there's no air conditioning,
just a large fan. In the
shadows, a cluster of
banners, including a Lilius
Disk Award in purple
perplex and a Golden Lion of
Venice with its plaque still
unengraved, gather dust.
Glamour is not the point.

LIKE HER OFFICE, Mary Lambert is unexpected: quiet, small, pale, with something light green eyes. Maybe it's the intensity of the fan, but the southern heart to her voice also seems more pronounced with acquaintance. "Ta" comes out "ahes" and "times" as "tuhns". More obvious than those, however, is her steady control. Lambert has directed only two films, *Sams* (1987) and *Pet Sematary* (1989), but, taken with her rock videos, which include Sting's *Writin' Together* Tonight, and many for Madonna, including *Borderline* and this year's *Like a Prayer*, with its controversial Christmas iconography, it's a solid body of work. (She also directed one episode of the TV series *Tales From the Crypt*, and supervised the *Under the Cherry Moon*,

taken over by its star, Prince, with disastrous results.) Lambert left Harvard, Arkansas, for the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) the year National Guardmen shot their uniforms at Kent State. "It was a crazy time to be going to college and to art school. There was no discipline on the campus at all. It was all resistance, Power to the People, performance art. You could blow up balloons and let them loose and say it was a painting."

At RISD, David Byrne was creating performance art and forming Talking Heads. (The band's bass and drummer, Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz, are still Lambert's close friends.) Some of the courses was as radical as the more-curricular activities. A photography lecturer forbade the use of brand name chemicals. "He told us Kodak was a corporate pig, so changing them was only one way to see colour. We processed the film and made the

prints, but we used things like pee and jelly. It was a great way to think, though it didn't really help you get a job when you graduated."

Lambert left with a painting degree, a taste for Wenders and Haring, and an ambition to make short, personal films. She edited for Boston TV station WGBH, then migrated to Los Angeles, joining a friend's special effects company. "I did animation and illustrations for different kinds of film graphics. Then some computer graphics work, a small amount of set design and an apprentice-type thing. But I quickly realised I'm too messy."

Looking for film work in Hollywood is never easy. "Sometimes I'd like the Feller Frank Schermer, pounding the pavement, having meetings." And being a woman didn't help. "I never believed that anything was going to hold me back, and certainly not my gender. I came from a great tradition of southern womanhood, ma'am, those women run the place down there. After the Civil War, the men were all gone, the women just took it on, without apologies and without complaints. I have great role models in my mother and my aunts and my grandmothers. These wonderful women worked hard, loved everybody, didn't complain, had a sense of humour, laughed, made other people happy, did their work."

"Only recently have I begun to feel that sexism does exist, in a big way. Most men really want to give you a chance—as long as you're not in any way threatening them."

Lambert finally got some TV commercials. "I wasn't the quick route into directing feature films the way it is in England. The commercials in this country were not sexy, funny, hip little narratives. It was a time of big economic boom. Producers were producers, and you sold them like products. I'm directing relevant commercials now again, and it's changed a lot in 12 years. The industry here is so highly evolved, so compartmentalised and uncorrupted, and the big studios have a very specific way they like to make





movies, and very specific guidelines for how a movie goes through production and how much money it has to make, and what kind of theater it's aimed at. It's all so over thought-out that they're usually looking for a director who fits a specific profile."

From commercials, it was a short step into music videos. "This was what I'd been doing at art school: little short, kinky films to music. I'd been writing 10 years for this to happen. I thought that when they came out with laser discs there was going to be a market for the kind of stuff I really enjoyed doing. It didn't happen and nobody wanted short films, so I gave up on it. Then I turned around one day and there they were."

Lambert's first music video was for Tim Wymann and Chris Frantz of the Tom Tom Club. It was based on *Dr. Jekyll, Sir Jekyll*, a cut from their *Greatest Love* album. "It used almost documentary style club footage to tell this slightly imposed story about the LA club scene. I shot it very young black and white because I didn't have any money for light on film. I was met by incredible opposition by managers of the record companies. Everyone thought music videos had to be in both colors, just like a feature film or a commercial. And now everyone's doing it."

Rock videos pose moral problems. "When you're shooting a narrative film or a commercial, you shoot the footage, then cut it to the rhythm of the images. If it takes so long to walk across a room, and it feels good, you leave it long. When you have a song that you're working with, maybe there's a short musical break — a guitar riff or something — and it's just perfect for that walk across the room. But if the riff is 10 seconds long and she doesn't get to the door until 11.5 seconds, it's awkward. You have to edit it very tightly in your head before you shoot it."

Take a *Proper* Lambert's dramatic video so far. "It's a combination of everything I've learned about filmmaking, about telling a story. And I really like the song. It said some fairly radical things that was fun to say, and were done in a big, national way, with some money to back it up. There was a lot of controversy — that it was anti-religious, misogynist. That made me smile, because I think that was just racism in disguise. What really upset people was the portrayal of a priest as a black man and the sexual thing between a white woman and a black man."

Valerie got Lambert into *Under the Cherry Moon*, an unhappy experience from which she struggled with the determination to make her own kind of film. From that came *Sense*.

Shot in Spain, and based on the cryptic novel by Patrick Chappin, *Sense* follows professional dare-devil Claire (Ellen Barkin) as she flees the biggest man of her career, a fire danc over Death Valley, to go to Spain, and the love/insurance she abandoned years before.

The significance of what happens in *Sense* in Spain isn't immediately clear. She wakes up in the roof of an airport runway at a blood-stained and drowsy, nudges a lift from a psychic cab driver (Alexis Bledel at his weirdest), falls in with a group of carefree trendies, including photographer Kit (Julian Sands) and screenwriter Nancy (Jodie Foster, with a convincing Knightbridge accent), and finally ends down on lower Augustine (Carroll O'Connor), only to be snubbed — to death, we assume — by his wealthy wife (Isabella Rossellini).

Lambert fills the film with baroque imagery of Claire floating in her red dress through the grubby Madrid city, crawling with Augustine in the sun-stained lanes of the town and filling in dreamy slow motion towards the desert from a plane. As in the video of *Take a Proper*,



ARROVE, IN A DREAM
STATE: CLAIRE (ELLEN BARKIN)
LOST IN SPAIN IN HER MIND:
SQUARED DANCE: MARY LAMBERT'S
DEATH: AVE, BARKIN (POUNCE) IN
JEF BARKIN, A LIFE NOT, BUT
WITH THE BOWL OF A MONSTER.
TAKING PACE: AVE
(JEF BARKIN), THE OLD
GUY, IN JEF BARKIN.

IT'S LIKE A DARK, SPOOKY PAINTING ... I HAD THIS STRONG VISUALIZATION OF IT IN MY MIND ... IT'S VERY SPARE. IT'S ABOUT ARCHETYPAL IMAGES AND SCENES AND INSTITUTIONS: THE FAMILY AND DEATH. I KNEW I COULD DO IT AS SOON AS I READ IT.

JANE LAMBERT ON *PET SEMATARY*

grounds open and close simultaneously, churches and angels abound, and there's a sustained sense of uneasiness and transcendence. The film's dedicated black-and-white narrative wasn't to the taste of most critics, but Sion's visual power and his penetrating sense of obsession transcended the often tortuous narrative.

Lambert found the script by accident in someone's dressing room and fell in love with it. It came to her when Michelangelo Antonioni pulled out. "I determined that I was going to make a very personal movie in spite of the fact that everybody told me not to do it. I knew there was going to be a limited audience for it and that some of the objectives were going to be very difficult to achieve. But I still wanted to do it and I'm very glad I did. Its failures are the failures of nerves and lack of experience. Nothing in it was done to please somebody else or to seduce an audience. It was an honest effort.

"I do so much enjoy the dream state, and experiential ways of conveying an idea. I thought I could tell the story in a non-linear fashion and involve people in their own subconscious feelings, drawing them into the story that way. I wanted to create a dream state within the film that would allow the audience to accept what was happening on the screen and go with it, and leave the story to their way rather than the traditional way. I didn't realize how hard it would be in a piece that long to fulfill my obligations to the audience. I think there are places where it's very successful—the scenes between Claire and Nancy, for instance, which are very dramatic.

"I wanted to do this whole movie from the point of view of the unconscious, of a woman who may or may not be dead. And all the people she meets are basically angels or manifestations of herself. I believe all the people in your dreams are just different aspects of your own personality that you're attempting to understand.

"One way of looking at *Sion* is that it's the last 10 seconds of her life. It's the way her life flashes in front of her as she's dying. Most dreams take 10 or 15 seconds to happen, but I'm sure everyone's had a dream they thought must have gone on all night. Your unconscious is a great storyteller."

Pet Sematary was an odd film to follow such a debut, but perhaps unavoidable, given Lambert's preoccupations with dream states and the unsavory. One of the best adaptations yet of the Philip King thriller, it staples the King trademark of horror erupting from the conventional. No dungeons, no clanking chains, just a couple of country houses, one occupied by an old gaffer, Bud (Fred Gwynne), and the other by the family of a young doctor, Louis (Dale Midkiff), and a strip of two-lane blacktop between.

But down the blacktop barrels a succession of oil tankers. Periodically they flume some dog or cat, which ends bury in the woods, at the end of a narrow path to which the fog always seems to cling. The path to the old pet cemetery. But Bud takes Louis to an even older Indian graveyard further up the hill. If you bury something there, he warns, it comes to life again, and very easily too, as we find out when first the little boy's cat is run over, then Gage (Miko Hughes) himself.

"The book's very frightening and you can't quite put your finger on why it's like a dark, spooky painting. After I'd read the script [by King], I had this strong visualization of it in my mind—of

the house and the road and the hill and the path and the mother and the father and the daughter and the son and the old man. It's very spare. It's about archetypal images and scenes and institutions: the family and death. I just knew I could do it as soon as I read it."

The stiff, solemn formality of 18th-century New England serves pointers of childhood as a mirror counterpart to the 18th-century traditions of *Pet Sematary*—and when Gage is raised from the dead by his grieving father, he reappears as a knowing little adult from such a painting, complete with adult hat and cane.

The poem was Lambert's idea. "Children are frightened of the strongest things—a lot of the time by portraits, particularly those primitive New Englander-type pictures where people are very stiff and death-like in their pose. Children are frightened of iconography, of objects that represent another objects. They're still trying to figure out why one cat moves and one cat doesn't."

"I had to think of a way to make that little boy move when he came back. Because he's so beautiful and such a precious child I did not want to see a puppet. We did also a bunch of when he might look like when the truck had run over him, and he just looked more and more like an old headless or a woman's face that had been cracked open and body put back together again. It wasn't scary, it was just ludicrous. I felt the saddest and most terrifying thing would be to see this little boy come back as a little dog, but with the soul of a monster."

Pet Sematary is both a critical and commercial success, a rare outcome for genre movies. But rather than do more horror films, Lambert is directing a new video for Debbie Harry, and her next feature projects back on the rock world as well: a version of *Pamela Des Barres's* scandalous confessions of her days as a groupie, *I'm With the Band*.

Lambert acknowledges "The book has its rabid side, how big people's cocks are, and how many cats she's slept with. We'll have some of that in there, but the theme of the movie is more like *Dancer*. It's about a group of young women at a cross point in their lives, that point being the Sixties, and the culture being rock 'n' roll fiction or become sematary." The need comes back into Lambert's grave again and the Arkansas town disappears. "It's going to explore some aspects of a society I know a lot about."



SCORSESE
SCHROEDER

Blood B

PURITY, MASCULINITY AND THE FLIGHT FROM THE

My principal anguish and the source of all my joys and sorrows from my youth onward has been the incessant, merciless battle between the spirit and the flesh. Within me are the dark transhuman forces of the evil one, human and pre-human within me too are the luminous forces, human and pre-human of God - and my soul is the arena where these two armies have clashed and war.
-MARTIN SCORSESE

I know perfectly well that death is better this. Man's worth, however, lies not in victory but in the struggle for victory. I also know this - which is more difficult. It does not even lie in the struggle for victory. Man's worth lies in one thing only - in this - that he lives and dares live without conceding to attempt any compromise. And I also know that this requirement which is more difficult yet. The certainty that no compromise exists must not make our blood run cold but must fill us with joy.
-MARTIN SCORSESE



Report

by

Lorraine Mortimer

IN THE ABBEY'S IMPASSIVE 'dream' sequence of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, an English-accented English angel/tempter tells Jesus that she doesn't want him blood. He need suffer no more pain, he has done enough. He is not to look back at the others, at that barren place of suffering, of crucifixion, he is being led to a new landscape, a garden of love and democracy. Earlier in the desert, a woman/tempter/sister had asked him why he was trying to save the world, had told him to save himself and find love. She, the evil one, has signified the arrival, the stilling, the forbidden. She is all that is opposite to struggle and transcendence. On the one hand, she has a clear why a man endures, endures embraces, hell to reach some unknown heaven. On the other hand, she will do what she can to stop him from getting there, to keep him in the realm of the senses, the perishable. She signifies mortality.

Whether she it does, *The Last Temptation of Christ* is perhaps most interesting for the image of masculinity it reveals and advocates. It is an image shared and shaped by the film's director, Martin Scorsese, son of an woman, Paul Schindler, and Nikita Khrushchev, whose book inspired the film. These men's ideas of what it is and what it takes to be a man are inseparable from their conceptions of what is needed to reach God. Their model of masculinity is embedded in a strong cultural and socio-political edifice. Yet it is always threatening to dissolve, as transparent and fragile as a bubble liable to burst in a touch. One's closest model in which fear of women and desire for male purging and purification are fundamental. Though the model is Christian in its origins, comparison can be made with other male-dominated traditions of belief and practice. A thorough anthropological excavation would reveal related preoccupations in a variety of cultures, but perhaps the most illuminating example comes from Malaisia. On the island of Wogeo, as the story is told in Ian Hogbin's *The Island of Miscreancy*, all males, when they attain maturity, require their 'purity' by the practice of inflicting artificial 'woundings'. Using the claw of a crayfish or comb, a man will induce an excessive by thinking about a detestable woman or by masturbation and then grab his penis to induce profuse bleeding. In many parts of Malaisia, men are thought to have cultural power while women have a more basic, potent and polluting biological capacity. Male bloodletting might be thought of as an expression of masculine envy, an appropriation, by harsh and dangerous means, of a female function.¹

MARTIN SCORSESE is convinced that there is a desire for blood sacrifice, which is primal and universal (through the anthropological evidence for



MARTIN SCORSESE



PAUL SCHRADER

rothers

THE FEMININE IN SCORSESE AND SCHRADER

the most ambiguous that he allows). Blood is the life force, the essence.¹ In criminal religion that sacrifice is represented in the communion. In his own film, culminating in *Taxi Driver*, he has dealt more with his "coldland", literal blood sacrifice.

Pauline Kael called her review of *Raging Bull* [written by Paul Schrader and Martin Scorsese, who also wrote *Moon Street* with Scorsese] "Religious Pulp, or The Incredible Hulk."² She complains that Scorsese, a great director when he does not try so hard, has got "movie making and the Church mixed up together; he's trying to be the saint of the cinema".³ Scorsese's John La Motta's life, she notes, was a ritual of suffering. He is continually washed in his own blood. Scorsese, a master of movement and energy in cinema, does not care about the fight — it is the punishment, given and received, with which he is obsessed. Scorsese, she suggests, does not want us to like John. He wants us to respond, on a higher level, to his energy and pain. "He wants a disposable low-life protagonist; then he suggests that this man is close to God, because he is God's animal."⁴ The film's brutality, Kael concludes, is essential, it's "the kind of movie that many men must fantasize about: their marlin would dream movie."⁵

Looking back on *Raging Bull* after making *The Last Temptation*,

Scorsese says he got to understand more about himself while making that film, the confusion of suffering and life, religion and a whole number of things. It was a matter of gods, of how much punishment you would take, "which goes directly into the suffering of Jesus... that's what I always thought!"⁶ At the end of *Raging Bull*, it is as though John La Motta (Robert De Niro) is imprisoned, physically, in an excess of flesh which he cannot transcend. There is a lot of it and Schrader, Martin and Scorsese do not give him his own voice. In typically cine-literate discourse, he speaks Martin Scorsese's lines from *On the Waterfront*. The flesh is raw, low-life boxer/petty entrepreneur has become abstraction, he has been labelled with spirituality. He is the refined artist's representation of sacrifice.

Robin Wood speaks about the "heterosexual culture" in *Raging Bull*. But there is something a little poignant about his desire to appropriate the film as a progressive, critical text.⁷ The proposition of men loving men, this time in a literal brotherhood, is in fact right on

the cracking surface of the film. It is a love which must be spoken in experimental film, "You Dumb Punk." By *The Last Temptation* that love can be spoken more clearly.⁸ In *Raging Bull*, John's wife, with her Lanza-Turnerized sexuality, is provocation, a source of jealousy and rage. She causes him to have an erection during a period of abstinence before a fight. He struggles and ultimately loses it. For Scorsese, mortification of the flesh is important. Discipline, associated with mortification, is important.⁹ And well before *The Last Temptation* there are associated with women. Mary Magdalene is everywhere. "How never had the courage to be a man", she tells Jesus in the brotherhood in *The Last Temptation* when he will not succumb to his feelings for her, to their mutual attraction. She just does not understand. The brotherhood here is a kind of gay metaphor. It is the place where men who would be Gods spend time — so they can suffer.¹⁰

LET US NOW go from the brother with the beautiful brother to the metaphorical garbage heap, the "open sewer" which in New York in *Taxi Driver* Scorsese, as mentioned above, spoke of primal feelings concerning bloodletting and sacrifice being still present today. There was a lot of that, he said, in *Taxi Driver*. For Travis Bickle, the film's

described protagonist, to be righteous and correct, the only answer was to be the wrath of God — the Old Testament God. Kaelan Jacobson noted that between Schrader and Scorsese "have defined the use of the last man left with a woman" (He suggests you don't Christ, in *The Last Temptation*, "is taken from the same use as all of Scorsese's previous ones"¹¹). Throughout *Taxi Driver*, we are treated to those Travis Bickle's moments and almost disgust which leads to a climax and explodes on a purifying violence. Travis, says Paul Schrader, seeks escape, outside of his mental chaos and die a glorious death. The devil god, the redeemer, the transcendence he is seeking is, according to Schrader, due of an adolescent — he's simply striking out. Travis, Schrader told Pauline Kael, reaches without any intent.¹² We should take what Schrader says seriously. He is one of those men whose work, you find, reveals so much about himself. Yet he clearly articulates what you think you have tried, what you have understood. Again, his preoccupation is on the mystery, on the contradictory, dual nature of his work.

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST IS PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING FOR THE IMAGE OF MASCULINITY IN REVEALS AND ADVOCATES... (THIS) MODEL OF MASCULINITY IS IMBEDDED IN A STRONG CULTURAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL EFFICE, YET IT IS ALWAYS THREATENING TO DISINTEGRATE, AS TRANSPARENT AND FRAGILE AS A BUBBLE LIABLE TO BURST AT A TOUCH. IT IS A DUALIST MODEL IN WHICH IDEAS OF WOMEN AND DESIRE FOR MALE PURSING AND FASCINATION ARE FUNDAMENTAL.

purifying violence. Travis, says Paul Schrader, seeks escape, outside of his mental chaos and die a glorious death. The devil god, the redeemer, the transcendence he is seeking is, according to Schrader, due of an adolescent — he's simply striking out. Travis, Schrader told Pauline Kael, reaches without any intent.¹² We should take what Schrader says seriously. He is one of those men whose work, you find, reveals so much about himself. Yet he clearly articulates what you think you have tried, what you have understood. Again, his preoccupation is on the mystery, on the contradictory, dual nature of his work.

SCORSESE SCHROEDER

In a 1976 interview with Schröder, Roth Thompson suggested that the author of *Taxi Driver* was so strong that even Scorsese's busy schedule did not overcome it. That acceptance, says Schröder, was reserved in the script:

What I think happened was that I wrote an essentially Protestant script, cold and isolated, and Marty directed a very Catholic film. My character wandered in from the snowy wastelands of Michigan to the kind, red-headed atmosphere of Marty's New York... Protestantism has a more red-headed, religious, righteous quality. The Catholic thing means an emotional, emotional thing. When you walk into a Protestant church, it's like that as if you've walked into a tomb, as a Catholic church, people are talking, there are priests, candles, a whole different atmosphere. That's personality, as built as if it were a Protestant church, but everything around him is strong differently. Both Marty and I have very strong religious backgrounds, so I don't think that's an unconscious superstition.¹⁷

Scorsese had wanted to become a priest but also, from early days, loved the cinema. Schröder graduated from Calvin College. His colorist's consciousness, he told Thompson, was defined by the Catholic and family structure. Movies, forbidden when he was younger, were an adult aberration. He grew up, he said, facing questions like



"What of you the conscience?"¹⁸ He was always thinking of spiritual questions, even in his juvenile thoughts, "rather than thinking about sex, my life or becoming a football star."¹⁹

After a period of intense depression and alcoholic disorientation which was, he hypothesized, the archetype for *Taxi Driver* came to him. Travis Bickle was the:

absolute symbol of urban loneliness. That's the thing I'd been living, day after day, symbol, my occupation. The film is about a car at the symbol of urban loneliness, a mental coffin.²⁰

In real life as well as in his films, Schröder says he is concerned with redemption. He believes in purging, in a kind of transcendence through contemplation or action. *Taxi Driver*, he has said, takes the European existential hero and puts him in an American context. He takes carousing. While Schröder shares Travis's "real need to triumph over the system", he sees himself as giving and working poetry much

the way he wants, getting paid for it, getting respect, having "buses the system." If, however, he were "everybody's poem, if I was Travis Bickle, the message would have to take another course, probably a violent one."²¹

As it was, Schröder says he was obsessed with guns for self-destructive reasons:

An interesting thing about guns, which my clients pointed out to me and which persists in *Taxi Driver*, is that all my suicidal fantasies are exactly the same: they all involve shooting myself in the head. I never fantasize about jumping off a building, or taking pills, or using a knife. The closest I could get to that I believe all the demons are in my head, the fantasy is to get them out of there. I have those evil, bad thoughts in there - it's my Catholic background. So when I have fantasies, they're all about my blowing those evil thoughts out of my head, and then I'll be all right. So it isn't even like dying. It's getting that out of my head.²²

Toward the end of the interview he tells of the "great fantasies" he had and still maintains about conquering the world. When his devoted father betrays him late, Schröder tells here that he did become an evangelist, just one of a different sort.

By pointing to the articulation of Schröder's concerns, I do not want to lose the feel, the experience of the film *Taxi Driver*. Here, I think, Schröder and Scorsese create some kind of religious argument about transcendence while conspiring up a very concrete, hyper-physical world. They are rather like the Jesus priests in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. They evoke hell for their young male audience precisely by enumerating and magnifying their desires, numbing them with the promise of eternal punishment involving the very substances of their bodily longings. The effect of *Taxi Driver*, like that of a rotator, builds up as it progressively presents further layers of the "open sewer", "hell of filth and scum" that Travis inhabits. Sometimes, he tells the presidential candidate, when he travels in his cab, he can hardly ride it. He can smell it, he gets headaches it's so bad. We too find Travis's lonely New York hell. It is foul, sticky, black poisons throw raw eggs over the windshield of his cab, the skin envelope of protection from the filth. And we know there is no real protection. Travis's cab, his mind, is penetrated, invaded by the filth. People look in the back seat, each time he returns that cab to the garage, he says, he has to clean the carpet off the back seat, some nights he drives off the blood.

Travis, himself, says Schröder in his script:

has the smell of me about me - with sex, rejected sex, lonely sex, but sex nonetheless. He is a raw meat block, driving forward toward what, but something. ...²³

While Travis moves towards a seeking the madness, he begins impulsively to threaten a psychotic passenger (played by Scorsese) makes about his wife or he watches her in an apartment he says she shares with a "nigger." He will tell her with a "44 Magnum pistol. The passenger - "We must think I'm not sick, but? A real person?" - a symptom of the city, responds to his wife's betrayal and emancipation with the threat of blowing away her "pussy", her daffling, offending part. Travis's vision is broader: "Somebody the rain'll come and wash all the stunk off the streets", he says early in his diary. He would rid the city of all pollution.

He begins his transfiguration. He gets in shape. The city has ruined his body. Too much abuse has gone on for too long. His transfiguration transcends him, more pollution. The candidate, Palantine, says the



BACKING FROM POOL HALL SCENE WITH CHASER (JENNIFER HUNTER) AND TWO OTHERS, IN MARIANO MONSIEUR'S ADAM FERRELL THE FREEB: TOP- JESUS (WILLIAM DAFOE) AND FOLLOWERS IN SCHNEIDER'S THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST; BELOVA TRAVIS (SCOTT W. HIND) AND BETTY (CYBIL HENRIKSEN) IN SCHNEIDER'S TAXI DRIVER.



people are beginning to rule. We, the people, know the night road, see the voice of hollow, ancestral populators. Travis destroys his religion. The honorably discharged nurse becomes Goff's warrior.

Here's a man who would not take it anyone... a man who stood up against the storm, the curse, the dogs, the fish, the star - here a woman who stood up. (Travis voice over)

Travis's first feature is a black supernatural thriller when he shoots

While we know Travis is mad, we are reminded he is a point of nightmare "anxiety" and world without just go about when, as one of the film's most vivid moments, the supernatural owner extends revenge upon this thief and all others by cold-bloodedly bombing the insubstantial ponds with an iron bar.

De Masi's tender, fragile Travis, with his edge of neurotic depression, becomes a gritty, robot warrior as he kills those who do not deserve to live. The offenders are brought down and he is bathed in blood which drips from his hand as he puts his gun to his head in a suicidal gesture when the police arrive.

Black covers the brutal sties, the walls, Travis has fulfilled his destiny. Finally, he told his (Jodie Foster), the courage promise, that there had never been any choice for him. Earlier still, when he had tried to speak his mind and he chose to follow a delusion "Wanted" (Foster says), he was told to go out and get drunk, to get laid, "you got no choice anyway, we're all fucked."

SCHNEIDER SAYS HE IS CONCERNED WITH REDEMPTION. HE BELIEVES IN PURGING, IN A KIND OF TRANSCENDENCE THROUGH CONTEMPLATION OR ACTION. TAXI DRIVER, HE HAS SAID, FACES THE EUROPEAN EXISTENTIAL HERO AND PUTS HIM IN AN AMERICAN CONTEXT... WHILE SCHNEIDER SHARES TRAVIS'S "REAL NEED TO TRIUMPH OVER THE SYSTEM", HE SEES HIMSELF AS WORKING PRETTY MUCH THE WAY HE WANTS, GETTING PAID FOR IT, (AND) GETTING RESPECT...

But Travis's lonely pre-destined Protestant had tried to "become a person" and make himself constant, he didn't believe in "moral self stream-of-consciousness", as he says in his diary. He tells her that what she is doing is nothing for a person to do. She is part of the fifth and must be saved from it.¹³

And it is with another female, a woman his own age, Betty (Cybill Rappoport), that he tries to make contact. She was wearing a white dress, he says, and we see, "like appeared like an angel out of the filthy mess. She's alone, they cannot touch her..." As Schneider admits, De Masi makes Travis, he brings a character together from his and Schneider's related but disparate visions. We believe and empathize with him in his own for contact. But Betty is a cool beauty in a hot body. In Travis's first vision, her loose white dress moves softly, in slow motion. When she goes on their date, as we see her now when traffic, hoodlums in black, unbuttoned her at the neck and clinging across her body, we can understand why Travis, in his income and hope divine loneliness, speaks everything by taking her to "shit" movies. Betsey, like the prostitute she works for, is spiritually blind. Fascinated by her posture, she can't help him, refuse a full contact. In the end, Travis realizes how much she is "like the others... cold and distant. And many people are like that - women for sale."¹⁴

SCHNEIDER'S VISION OF LOS ANGELES in *American Gigolo* is also "sensational."¹⁵ It is marked by a profound darkness. Here the course of recent value and eventually of spirituality is failed (Richard Gere), a male prostitute who gives pleasure to older women neglected by their husbands. Unlike those who surround him, Johns know he is looking, telling himself for fine clothes, a fine apartment, the appearance of class. In a lawless environment, he gets a measure of love. The film's arrangement nature is mirrored for Luca, a black gay pimp who dwells in the inner underworld, goes to get Johns to "do him" (what is Johns refuse) and sleeps with young, pale, blond boys. Luca gets what a coming no later. Johns also get what he deserves: he is redeemed by love, love which has nothing to do with sex, love expressed through the barrier of prison walls - truly spiritual love.¹⁶

American Gigolo, if appealing, does not come close to the rhapsody of a Schneider film. It is more purely a Protestant story with its sensuous

charge coming powerfully from its roots, its photographed beautiful objects, cars, clothes, furnishings, and Johns in his "sensual" beauty. Much else, with whom Johns finally makes spiritual contact, as played by Lauren Hutton (and to be the Berlin Union II girl - she signifies the cosmic world. She is now 33, she would soon be like the others neglected, middle-aged women of Johns did not save her.

Ned Sinyard has suggested that Schneider's success is attributable to "in the creative use of his critical facility and a successful deployment of his Catholicism."¹⁷ When Schneider suggested that *Taxi Driver* was a mish mash of junkies with "no necessary message as the value level", he compared it to a rough, raw adolescent work of Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*.¹⁸ Sinyard suggested Schneider might be called a "Tank food" Dostoevsky.

SCORADER SCHROSESE

Like Descartes, he is violent, melodramatic, whimsical and profoundly introspective. Like the Russian master also, he uses the master formulae of crisis fiction to create intense psychological dramas about self-obsessed people who struggle forward, between heaven and hell, and who find redemption through suffering and sacrifice.²⁰

If Schrader has the best of the master-plot about him, Nikan Kazantseva certainly does not. Kazantseva, we know, was a spiritual hero, quoted by reviewers, emulated by motion picture men in their quest for a new spiritual life. For Kazantseva – unlabeled in *Christ, Buddha, Marx and Nietzsche* – Christ was the supreme model of the man who struggles.

Scorsese strongly acknowledged his debt to Kazantseva, for his "messiah" and "prophets" Jesus, a Jesus who was more "bleeding" but more "accessible" than others, whose human nature did not fully understand the divine role it had to play.²¹ Kazantseva desired freedom and success. The hero and character were mankind's supreme model. His own writings, he has said, were only a means to aid his struggle – for deliverance. He invoked "great figures who had successfully undergone the most elevated and difficult of all evils", wanting "to gain courage by seeing the human soul's ability to triumph over everything."²² The inscription on Kazantseva's grave reads: "I do not hope for anything. I do not fear anything. I am free."²³ Interestingly, Schrader quoted from Kazantseva something he had appended to the outline of *The Last Temptation of Christ* to remind everybody what the film was about: "It is not God who will save us. It is we who will see if God be worthy, by creating and transmitting matter into spirit."²⁴

Kazantseva, then Schrader, saw God as an extension of human experience. There is more to it, than just Schrader notes a kind of "pseudo-superman kind of thinking," in what Kazantseva says. It is we who in struggle will transmit matter into spirit and bring God down from heaven. Says Schrader nearby: "That's Kazantseva – it's also – herme." Again, he quotes the writer:

This book was written because I wanted to offer a supreme model to the man who struggles. I wanted to show him that he must not fear pain, temptation or death – because all these can be conquered, all these have already been conquered.²⁵

There is something very familiar about the notion of the great figure who is arrogant in the face of the relentless pain and death, proud and joyful, not because of the pleasures of everyday life, but because of his own elevation. The great figure is an ancient archetype. If the Nietzschean superman was one crucial model for Kazantseva (who, his English translator suggests, adopted a series of "messiah" throughout his life quest), Buddha, like Christ, was for



Kazantseva "a superman who had conquered nature."²⁶ While the conflict between flesh and spirit might last until death, through struggle, man might meet God, "the summit of immortality."²⁷ Christ says Kazantseva, writes us to take his secret, "following in his bloody tracks."²⁸

If we are able to follow him we must have a profound knowledge of his world; we must enter his struggle. His victory over the blossoming season of the earth, his wonder of the great and small joys of men and his secret from warrior to warrior, explorer to explorer, to catastrophe's summit, the Cross.²⁹

Christ, says Kazantseva, conquered "the inevitable exclusionism of simple human pleasures."³⁰ Women, of course, are a part of the "blossoming season of the earth." Translator P. A. Rian notes that during a period of acute fervor – as part of Kazantseva's writing search for "his true father, his true secret" – he moved in an ancient Macedonian monastery, where not only human formulae but even cows and hens were excluded.³¹

As Scorsese remarked – and his film is true to the idea – Christ's last temptation was not power or sexuality, but the temptation to give into the human side of his nature and live like us ("us"), in this instance, being patriarchal males, fathers of families). A man who would be a God is not only threatened by the sticky sexuality of women, the involuntary excitement caused by women, a visceral response within himself which he cannot master. Women – like the sea, fire and the colors of the world – is a constant reminder of human fragility, perishability, decay and death. Descendents, the passing, momentous and emotional enjoyment of children affirming "recognition" and "hope" in the face of human frailty, is also a temptation to the warrior man to who would be God. In Scorsese's film, Christ asks his mother Mary "Who are you?" He has no mother, no family, only a father in Heaven. Belief in a heavenly, super cultural Father can help us distance ourselves from the knowledge that we are fleshly, finite beings, born, as blood and pain, of other fleshly beings – women. Women remind us that we are human. Scorsese and his brother artists and intellectuals

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IMAGES BY MICHAEL FINEBERG, PAGE, YODER

LA MONTA (LEFT: MONTA) IN SCORSESE'S *RAISING HELL*.

THIS PAGE: TOP: MARY MAGDOLENE (BARBARA HERBERT) IN *THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST*; BELOW: HER (JOHN PASTER)

IN *THE BAY*.

are concerned with the maternal, agonized father/son/lover with whom men might be rewarded if they suffer enough. The ambiguous power of the excluded female is widely appropriated.

Richard Corliss, admiring of Scorsese's "bally" adaptation of *The Last Temptation*, suggests that Scorsese knew that Kassaravaka's story could be the ultimate buddy movie. For 15 years he had been directing secular drunks of Iran during Jesus' period of delusion/dream — brought down from his destiny on the cross by the angel/tempter — that he hangs around with women and children. When Mary Magdalene dies, he tells him

that "there is only one woman in the world, one woman with many faces. This one falls, the obscene ones." He joins Mary of Bethany and her sister Martha, having children with Mary and being given love by the angel/tempter to join the water in her room and make love to her. "There's only one woman in the world, go inside!" In this period of soft, giddy confusion from his visions, Jesus is occupied in *frustration* — he grows old as he is ready to die. But as her his brother comes to see him — and on — for the masculine, for greater, higher things. Peter comes in and pushes aside the child/tempter. Christlike, Jesus serves.²² In the Kassaravaka/Scorsese scenario, Jesus was a loyal, loving man ordered by Jesus to betray him. Now he is angry Jesus was the traitor. His place was on the cross. What business did he have with these women and children? You broke my heart... We held the world in our hands... You took me in your arms and you begged me 'Betray me'... I loved you so much."

Here is love. Either as the film, Jesus and Jesus sleep sweetly, solely together. Christ kisses John the Baptist, for a long time, on the lips. Here is love again. True warmth and affection is something shared by men. And it depends on the exclusion of women.

Scorsese says he wanted to make *The Last Temptation* to "go to know Jesus better." While he did not intend, on the film, primarily to

be a bringer of the Word, he has always taken the idea of love very seriously, the idea of creating "a kind of conglomerate of love."²³ He was trying to understand loving and forgiveness. To apply this in his own life was very hard and he thought that, doing *The Last Temptation*, he could explore this problem through Jesus' eyes with his inability to "turn the other cheek."

It's speaking for a lot of us. We want to do it but it's very hard to do and we know that basically in order to live together in this world we're going to have to learn how to do that. And so I think to that extent I've wanted to maybe scratch a little of the surface of it. I don't purport to be able to do it myself, but... I'm beginning to understand a little more how one should live.²⁴

Yet in *The Last Temptation* Scorsese's and Scorsese's conglomerate of love is cold. In earlier Scorsese films, we could feel the exhilaration of the love/love relationships. Jonathan Rosenbaum argues that the Kassaravaka/Scorsese depiction of Jesus, wrestling with the human side of his nature as he comes to terms with the God within him.

Jesus little more like any developed sense of community, and just as little open for love as anything more than an observation.²⁵

IT DID NOT WINCH ON LABELER that Pauline Kael's complaint that *Raging Bull* missed up the Church and movie-making came after that picture had, for her, gone sour. In her review of *Moon Struck*, she says:

In Scorsese's vision, music and the movie work within and on the terms in which we perceive ourselves. Music and the street and the Church. A worker's love.²⁶

Her celebration of *Moon Struck* captures what is gone in Scorsese. The film "has its own something, episodic rhythm and a high charged emotional range that is dizzyingly sensual."²⁷ Near the beginning of the film when Charlie (Harvey Keitel) goes into the bar, "the camera glides along with him as he's drawn toward the restless dancers on the barroom stage." We the audience, says Kael, share his trance. We become participants and it is in a cinema which is refreshingly serious, urgent, dirty and alive — a bit like life. Here we become animated. Cartography, music and performance all activate. Moon Struck.

It's as if these characters were just casually part of an open web pop times. The music is the electricity in the air of this movie: the music is like an engine that the characters surge to. Johnny Boy, the most susceptible, falls down through the music...²⁸

Kael, in her own small microscope bouncing off from Scorsese's, manages to reach on the abandon, the delirium web which De Niro's Johnny Boy charges the screen. The "intensely appealing De Niro, born a 'beautiful man'"²⁹, doesn't just act, says Kael, "he takes off into the vapors."³⁰

Daryl Deeley also enthused about Scorsese's "violent sincerity", his unapologetic depiction of his characters, life of "crusty confusion." Deeley saw Charlie's and Johnny Boy's "edgy, wonderfully malleable love for each other" holding the film in tension.³¹ The male characters' energy had an goal or purpose — it was just them, present, like the hypnotic irresistible cry to whose "bottomless" we are drawn. Deeley speaks about the allowance of space to the Moon Struck characters, the connection between techniques of improvisation and the extension of their impermanence. The mood of dialogue, he notes, is "almost ecstatically high pitched."³² Yet he suggests that while

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AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH OF
FORDSON, TAKEN BY THE FAMOUS
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P

EDWARD L. FREEMAN IS HOLLYWOOD'S RES-

R

DENT MAYBECK PRODUCE, WITH NEARLY 30 FEATURES UNDER HIS BELT IN

E

JUST 30 YEARS (INCLUDING *BARBARELLE*, *DESPAIR*, *PLENTY*, *ODD JOHN-*

S

ING BARTON AND *WALL STREET*), FREEMAN POSSESSES AN UNUSUALLY

S

KIEN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS REQUIRED TO NAVIGATE THE MIDDLE

M

GROUND BETWEEN ART AND COMMERCE IN THE SO-CALLED NEW HOLLY-

A

WOOD. RECENTLY, FREEMAN WAS IN AUSTRALIA AS A GUEST OF THE AUS-

N

TRALIAN FILM, TELEVISION AND RADIO SCHOOL.

QUESTION: You entered the film industry in the 1960s as the Hollywood studio system was in an advanced state of decay, with the traditional power of the producers and studio heads passing into the hands of independent producers.

FREEMAN: At the high school I attended in New York there was a teacher of modern European history, Philip Perlman, who used films in his classes. We were shown titles like *The Blue Angel*, *Cathleen of Dr. Calgarry* and *Monsieur Du Voyage*.

A friend of mine, Johnny Christrich, introduced me with the films of Ingmar Bergman and the French New Wave, and both of them making I was very attracted to at the time.

When we started out as a filmmaker, my partner, Paul Williams, and I had become friends with Bert Schneider's group at BBS Productions [Ray Slater,

Five Days/Week) which was then making a major impact on the film community. We all subscribed to the theory that film could change the world and thus felt that we were in touch with the currents of the time.

QUESTION: Your first feature film as a producer, *Over the Top* (1969), details the high school culture clash between an intellectual type and a jock, the latter played by Jon Voight. Why was the film's release delayed?

FEINMAN: The film was shot in 1967 and after completion was sold to United Artists (UA), and at that time by David Polner. Jon Voight had been cast in *Midnight Cowboy*, which United Artists felt may be a winner, so our film was put on hold until after *Cowboy's* release. Maybe they felt that our film could hurt *Cowboy* but then *Cowboy* could help ours.

We then made an agreement with UA to make our second feature, *The Revolutionary* (1973), based on a novel by Elia Kazanberger (*A Walk With Love And Death*), again with Jon Voight. Because it was a bigger investment on UA's part, they decided it would be better to release *The Revolutionary* first, which they did. But by the time they got around to considering *Over the Top*, the film had dated and become a period piece, with the result that it went out on a double bill with *The Christiane Feyerabend Story*.

After *The Revolutionary*, Paul was considered one of the brightest, up-and-coming filmmakers and was even looked up to for a brief period by Martin Scorsese and Brian De Palma as their mentor. Warren Beatty then offered him any project of his choosing and he decided to go with *Deadly as the Devil* or *Devils in the Brain: Forty-Nine Last-Days Blues* (1973), but this choice eventually undermined Paul. He was going through a lot of changes and was always on the cusp of the cultural front of the moment. For example, after *The Revolutionary* was completed he married Eldridge Cleaver in Morocco.

During *Deadly* he started to experiment with drugs. In casting scenes people would come in and show how much they knew of the culture and how well qualified they were to be in the film.

Paul had met a relatively unknown actor named Richard Dreyfuss whom he thought would be good in a part, but he was bypassed in favor of an actor who was a bigger name at the time, Robert F. Lyons (*Gaming Strategy*). But he proved inadequate.

When we realized that a mistake had been made, we had the chance of going to Warner and telling them that we had made a \$150,000 error of judgment, and risk losing the whole movie, or ploughing ahead with what we had. We chose the latter course, which proved to be a valuable lesson for the future.

QUESTION: How did you become first acquainted with writer-director Terrence Malick?

FEINMAN: Through Paul Williams, who had gone to Harvard with Terry and Jacob Blackman. He had been trying to set up *Badlands* (1973) for some years and had the full endorsement of people like Arthur Penn.

After *Badlands* and *Days Of Heaven* (1978), Terry spent several years working on a biographical screenplay about Thomas Edison and another script about Herman in contemporary Times which he delivered to Paramount under a long-term inquiry left by the former company president, the late Charles Blackman. Terry had an aversion to the social content of Hollywood and wanted no part of it.

QUESTION: Three directors of photography are credited on *Badlands*, but the film's visual style is remarkably consistent.

FEINMAN: The late Brian Probyn established the look of the lighting and the interiors but was taken ill, nicknamed by the team, the long-haired and Terry's shyness. On several occasions I can recall Brian shooting with the dais upside down as a form of protest in a disagreement with Terry about methods of orthodoxy coverage and switching shots. When Brian left, there was a big cross on an and Tak Fujimori, Brian's assistant [later to be DOP on several Jonathan



LARRY FORDER COLLABORING WITH PAUL FEINMAN, DIRECTING JOHN AND MARRIOTT TO THE MEAT, and John Hughes' *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, took over on the understanding that he would be working only on an interim capacity while we searched for a new DOP [Steven Lerner]. Amazingly, despite the input of these different hands, the film looks remarkably seamless.

QUESTION: With the diversity of projects that you produce, how difficult is it to physically oversee them? Oliver Stone describes you in this respect as a "hands off producer."

FEINMAN: Oliver, at this stage of his career, is at the peak of his game and is totally responsible individual who keeps to the schedule and, in that sense, is a producer's dream. He doesn't waste time, is very efficient and there is no halting.

But going back to our first collaboration, *The Hunt* (1981), I was very much a hands on producer. Our relationship has evolved as a subsequent year to the point where now he is very experienced. It can be a problem overseeing films when you have more data on in production at a given time. When this does occur it is due to factors beyond my control. Michael Flynn, who has been working with my company for six years, can act right hand. I also employ line producers and this helps ensure a continuity between projects.

I have reached a critical point in my career where I am faced with the decision as to whether I should expand or contract. I must admit that film producing is a very seductive activity in the sense that I can make films happen that I want to see made.

QUESTION: Is there any method to which you assess properties?

FEINMAN: It is not very systematic. Normally script departments want

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Why do you no longer subscribe to CINEMA PAPERS? Please write in:

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- | | |
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And on average how long in total would you spend reading an issue of CINEMA PAPERS?

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
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| 2 - 3 HOURS | 4 |
| MORE THAN THREE HOURS | 5 |

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- | | MORE | LESS | SAME |
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| C) FILM REVIEWS | 1 | 2 | 3 |
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COVER: KEVIN MAZUR



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QUESTION 7:

For each of the statements below, please say whether you strongly agree, partly agree, partly disagree or strongly disagree by circling the code which corresponds to your response?

	STRONGLY AGREE	PARTLY AGREE	PARTLY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A) THE FILM REVIEWS IN CINEMA PAPERS ARE BITEY AND TOO ACADEMIC	1	2	3	4
B) CINEMA PAPERS SHOULD BE PUBLISHED MORE OFTEN	1	2	3	4
C) CINEMA PAPERS SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON AUSTRALIAN RATHER THAN INTERNATIONAL STORIES	1	2	3	4
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E) THE FEATURES IN CINEMA PAPERS ARE TOO LONG	1	2	3	4

QUESTION 8 (a):

What do you like most about CINEMA PAPERS?

QUESTION 8 (b):

What do you like the least about CINEMA PAPERS?

QUESTION 9:

How often do you read the following magazines?

	EVERY ISSUE	MOST ISSUES	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
A) E AND I	1	2	3	4
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C) THE BULLETIN	1	2	3	4
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E) ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS REVIEW	1	2	3	4
F) FILM COMMENT	1	2	3	4
G) ROLLING STONE	1	2	3	4

QUESTION 10:

In an average week about how many hours would you spend watching the following television stations?

	DO NOT WATCH	LESS THAN 2 HOURS	2-4 HOURS	4-10 HOURS	MORE THAN 10 HOURS
ABC	1	2	3	4	5
SBS	1	2	3	4	5
COMMERCIAL TELEVISION	1	2	3	4	5

QUESTION 11:

Would you rent videos of movies regularly
occasionally or never?

REGULARLY	1
OCCASIONALLY	2
DON'T HAVE VCR/NEVER	3

QUESTION 12:

How often would you go to see the following type of films?

	ONCE A MONTH OR MORE	EVERY 2-3 MONTHS	LESS OFTEN	NEVER
A) 'ART HOUSE' EUROPEAN FILMS	1	2	3	4
B) AUSTRALIAN FILMS	1	2	3	4
C) DOCUMENTARIES AND SHORTS	1	2	3	4
D) FOREIGN OR EXPERIMENTAL FILMS	1	2	3	4
E) MAINSTREAM AMERICAN FILMS	1	2	3	4

QUESTION 12:	When was the last time you did any of the following?			
		IN LAST YEAR	MORE THAN 1 YEAR AGO	NEVER
	A) ATTENDED A FILM FESTIVAL	1	3	3
	B) TRAVELLED INTERSTATE	1	3	3
	C) TRAVELLED OVERSEAS	1	3	3
	D) BOUGHT A TV, VIDEO OR STEREO	1	3	3
	E) BOUGHT A FRIDGE, STOVE, WASHING MACHINE, SETTEE	1	3	3
	F) BOUGHT A COMPUTER OR FAX FOR USE AT HOME OR WORK	1	3	3
	G) OBTAINED A LOAN FROM A BANK, BUILDING SOCIETY OR CREDIT UNION	1	3	3
	H) BOUGHT A VIDEO CAMERA	1	3	3
	I) BOUGHT A SUPER 8 CAMERA	1	3	3

QUESTION 14:	Is the car you mainly drive ...	AUSTRALIAN-MADE	1
		IMPORTED	3
		OR, YOU DO NOT DRIVE A CAR	3

QUESTION 15:	Would you drink any of the following things every week, at least once a month, less often or never?				
		EVERY WEEK	AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH	LESS OFTEN	NEVER
	A) DRINK WINE, CHAMPAGNE OR PORT	1	3	3	4
	B) DRINK EITHER LOCAL OR IMPORTED BEER	1	3	3	4
	C) DRINK SPIRITS SUCH AS SCOTCH, BRANDY OR GIN	1	3	3	4

QUESTION 16:	Do you smoke cigarettes?	YES	1
		NO	3

QUESTION 17:	Do you currently work full time, part time or not at all?	FULL TIME	1
		PART TIME	3
		NOT AT ALL	3

QUESTION 18 (a): What is your job title? _____

QUESTION 18 (b): In what field is that? _____

QUESTION 19:	Your age?	18 - 24 YEARS	1
		25-34 YEARS	3
		35-49 YEARS	3
		50 YEARS OR MORE	4

QUESTION 20:	You are?	MALE	1
		FEMALE	3

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recounting what was in the script. He allowed himself the freedom and the flexibility to play with the material and, in the process of editing, it changed enormously. It was a very exciting intellectual process, totally original and it looked in the medium in a manner that was totally fresh.

QUESTIONS: Looking to the future, what has happened to your plans of collaboration with Kenneth Anger on an adaptation of *Hollywood Babylon*?

PRELIMINARY: Several treatments were written but the main problem here lies in the complexities of creating a cinematic equivalent to the books that would somehow illustrate the under-rake of Hollywood's history. We toyed with the idea of increasing scenes, such as the infamous Perry Anderson party, but this could be dubious.

QUESTIONS: You are also planning a collaboration with Japanese director, Tazuo Imai (*The Funeral, Tsunami*)

PRELIMINARY: I am hoping to undertake a project with him that would be shot in America and Japan. It mainly depends on when he is ready as we have been discussing it for two years now.

QUESTIONS: And when about working with Jean Jacques Beaudin?

PRELIMINARY: We have developed a script with him called *The Year Of The Glass*, which is about the Red Brigades and the kidnapping of Aldo Moro. After spending a lot of money and time with the writer he chose, he decided not to go ahead with the project. The script has now been rewritten and we hope to make the film in conjunction with English producer, Eric Decker (*Big Ass Nancy*) and are currently looking for a new director. Despite these problems, Beaudin is a filmmaker I would very much like to work with.

QUESTIONS: Kathryn Bigelow just recently directed *Ride Steel* for your company.

PRELIMINARY: *Ride Steel* is an action thriller with an observational uncinematic pace that owes more to *Fatal Attraction* than the Darryl Farrow movies. Kathryn had previously worked with Oliver Stone on a project about street gangs in East LA which never came to be. One of the main reasons I became involved with Kathryn before the release of her

previous feature, *Near Dark*, was that I had heard from several sources that she was an unusual talent.

QUESTIONS: Finally, with all this film activity I am surprised to hear that you and Brian De Palma are planning a stage venture together.

PRELIMINARY: Brian and I are very keen to stage a version of *Platoon Of The Penitents* in New York. Paul Williams has composed a special score with a dozen rare songs. Brian was all set to go when he was offered the film *The Shadow of the Vampire*. Someday it will happen.

PRODUCTION

- 1968 *Out of It* (Paul Williams) - producer
- 1970 *The Revolutionary* (Paul Williams) - producer
- 1972 *Desire* (Paul Williams) - producer
- 1973 *Revelation* (Terrence Malick) - producer
- 1974 *Sister* (Brian De Palma) - producer
- 1974 *Platoon of the Penitents* (Brian De Palma) - producer
- 1978 *Dragnet* (Ramon Meneses Finkelshteyn) - exec. producer
- 1978 *Paradise Alley* (Sylvester Stallone) - exec. producer
- 1979 *Old September* (Jean YVES) - producer
- 1980 *Heavy Metal* (John Lynch) - exec. producer
- 1980 *Nauma* (No Wabbling) - exec. producer
- 1981 *The Road* (Oliver Stone) - producer
- 1982 *Conan the Barbarian* (John Milius) - exec. producer
- 1982 *Das Boot* (Wolfgang Peterson) - exec. producer
- 1983 *Prison of Remembrance* (Wilfred Leitch) - exec. producer
- 1985 *Pilgrimage* (Fred Schepers) - exec. producer
- 1986 *Conan: The Legend* (Sam Raimi) - exec. producer
- 1986 *Half Moon Street* (Rob Swire) - exec. producer
- 1986 *True Romance* (David Permut) - exec. producer
- 1987 *Cherry 2000* (Steven DeLuca) - exec. producer
- 1987 *Good Morning, Babylon* (Paulo and Veronica Tassari) - exec. producer
- 1987 *Masters of the Cinema* (Gary Goldstein) - producer
- 1987 *Roller* (Alex Cox) - exec. producer
- 1987 *Roller* (Oliver Stone) - producer
- 1988 *Talk Radio* (Oliver Stone) - producer
- 1989 *Paris by Night* (David Hare) - exec. producer
- 1989 *Ride Steel* (Kathryn Bigelow) - producer

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HUNTER CORDAY

➤ Film Matters

The 1989 Sydney Film Festival

FILM FESTIVAL ARTICLES DESERVE A POETIC OPENING, SOME GESTURE TOWARDS DRAWING BACK A VELVETED CURTAIN. THEIR SUBJECTS ARE THE CINEMATIC EQUIVALENTS OF MAGIC ELIXIRS: WE LOOK TO THEM TO CURE OUR MALADIES, AND WEAR THE EXPERIENCE AS AN AMULET TO WARD OFF BANAL VISIONS ON SCREENS LARGE OR SMALL IN THE COMING

YEAR. BUT THEN THE POETRY SHOULD BE PUT ASIDE BECAUSE FESTIVALS ALSO DEMAND OUR ATTENTION AS PRINCIPAL FORUMS ON THE CURRENT STATE OF WORLD CINEMA. THEY SHOULD SHOW US VISIONS FROM OTHER CULTURES AND METHODS FROM OTHER PRODUCTION STRUCTURES.

IT IS COMMONLY SAID that film festivals in Australia have an important role in supporting or supplementing the local distribution patterns by bringing new films to the attention of local distributors. And while it is true that several of the films screened at the Sydney Film Festival are being released in Australia (including *The Youngbloods*, *High Hopes*, *Salem*, *Smiley and the Happiness Thru*), it could be argued that festivals also highlight precisely what is not being distributed in Australia. They show us what we're missing because part of their attraction is the rarity value of the films screened — radical, exotic, obscure.

What's at stake is something very precious: a film culture. The influence festivals have on film culture is varied but real, and includes the inspiring of local writers, directors, designers, actors, discussions with visiting directors (ranging from audiences to industry professionals and film bureaucrats), and critical responses of images by audiences and the culture press. Without festivals we'd only see our own films (or other versions of them from California) and have a narrow critical perspective from which to assess cinema. In these times, the possibility of such parochialism has already appeared on the horizon as the industry becomes an officially incorporated monolith and diversity of cultural criticism is under threat. The danger is uniformity, on screen and page. Therefore, the responsibility of any film festival is weighty, and, though the task I have just assigned to it may only be partially achieved, the report looks towards those ideals in its judgements.

The familiar structure of the Festival has been maintained by its new Director, Paul Symes, with a main program of films in the State cinema (referred to in this article), and a program of documentaries, short films and feature in the smaller State Two cinema. The Festival also maintained its short film awards, now sponsored by the Denali Cinema (see separate list), which were presented on opening night. If the audience was looking for indications of a new style to the Festival, then Paul Symes attempted to give it with his speech, in which he wanted the Festival to demonstrate that a film was more than entertainment, that watching these films was a form of freedom of expression which at that time was being cruelly crushed on the streets of Beijing, and, lastly, to give the Festival's slogan, he wanted the Festival to show that "Film really does matter."

(TEXT, PSYCHOLOGY, VISIONS)

The State cinema screened the year were polarized between inspired (and intriguing) visions, and lush, heavy, often self-indulgent narratives.

It is difficult to decide if this dichotomy occurred because better quality films were not available (there is, after all, a discernible cycle in which some years produce, by coincidence, a better "crop" than others), or represent poor selection choices. This assessment is made even harder by the fact that Paul Symes took up his position only five months ago, limiting the time and scope of the films for selection. Any Festival needs a year to be assembled, and a finer judgement can be made after next year's. The best features showed a depth of vision, wit and an exploration of human values. In this category were: *Somewhere in Love*, *Tarzan*, *The Youngbloods*, *High Hopes*, *Somewhere in Love* 1989 and *Tachibana*.

Henry Jaglom's *Somewhere in Love* is a film about Americans on the make, and Orson Welles holding court. The two threads intertwine as a group of actors gather on St. Valentine's Day in a soon-to-be-demolished L.A. theatre. Posing as a filmed investigation into their love lives and the difficulty of keeping a relationship visible, *Somewhere in Love* is also concerned with the difficulty of art. Jaglom plays a director who manipulates all for the sake of his film, once turning away from a seemingly innocent moment with his girlfriend to ask the camera operator if the shot was good. He stages the "characters", including Welles's companion, Oja Kodar, talks about love and life ("life's never better than *Love Is The Answer*"), making an handsome plays for each other ("Shall we have major sex here?") and try to escape (Jaglom's over proud Marnie says "Who do I have to fuck to get OUT of this movie?"). Welles, speaking from "the cheap seats", comments on language, acting and love. This is his last screen performance, and apparently he takes over the proceedings by the short three and blame of his experience and wisdom.

Mike Leigh's *High Hopes* clearly shows that if a similar meeting were held on his set, the outcome would be radically different. Privately digging away at Thatcherite Britain, Leigh's film obviously



LEFT: GODARD SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN WITH CAREY JOHNSON IN JACQUES BEAUME'S FOLLOW-UP, *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*. RIGHT: GODARD'S *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*

care for its character through an unending society. His film charts the changes now overtaking Britain through a close and tender study of a family so obsessed with party squabbles that "big" events come as a pleasant relief. *High Hopes* has a refreshing black humor which could have been distributed more widely through other films screened this year.

George Sluizer's *The Vanishing* is a film which will undoubtedly provide audiences when it is released. Chosen by the Australian Film Critics' Circle as "Best Film" (in contrast to the audience, which selected *Indignus*), *Sluizer's* film is an outstanding study of the psychology of murder. It is not afraid to confront its audience with the possibility that a murderer may set from the calm of calculated crime. *The Vanishing* was the most disturbing, uncomfortable film shown at the Festival, yet it also had some of the most effectively compelling images and the most tightly strung script. Like no other character, *Sluizer's* film seeks perfection in everything.

Away from Los Angeles and Europe, there is another cinema which was openly represented this year. The three films of Asia, from countries as diverse as Japan, India and Madagascar, were impressive for their inventive narrative structures and production values in the face of immense restrictions. (Dr. Shikhaendra Nath-Saha's *Tharoor*, for example, like last year's *Calcutta*, comes from Assam and represents radical independence filmmaking from that province). Shyamkanti Kankola's *Jaamun* (Festivals'1999), which has already received the new director award from the Japanese Film makers' Union, subverts the traditional gender roles of Japanese cinema, while Rajmund Rajmanavala's *Taharaka* was a moving exploration of the anti colonial revolt in Madagascar in 1947. It shows the effects of the war on villagers rather than events from the front-line, men have to become heroes, the village suffers from marauding soldiers, propaganda leaflets from each side float down the river.

(FRENCH CINEMA)

The Festival presented a celebration of French cinema to mark the Bicentenary of the Revolution. Three films (Miguel Courmet's *Joanne's House*, Jean-Claude Rameau's *The Bread and the Fury* and Francois Dupeyron's *A Strange Place for a Marriage*) were shown on a special "tribute" night, and, along with the opening film, Michel Deville's *La Laiterie*, proved that France is quite capable of making films as shallow and tame as any other country. The last tribute was screened elsewhere in the program and included

Jean-Luc Godard's *Kay Tote Right Up* (in which he asserts that any cinema character is a mistake); Claude Chabrol's *Women's Liberation*; Rene Clair's superb *At July*. French cinema has been fundamental to the development of film in schools and criticism, and if this Festival had a major flaw in its programming it was the weak and timid tribute to this history. A more rigorous choice from a longer list that might have included Pagnol, Vigo, Renoir, Carné, Dreyer, Rohmer, Truffaut, Resnais...

(THE WORD, THE PAGE, THE PRESENT)

Documentaries had a particularly strong presence this year. All except for the confident and convincing John Dugan's

After. After confirmed cinema's concern for the human condition. Marcel Ophuijs's *Man of Tomorrow: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* and Jean Louis and Marceline Loridan's *A Tale of the Wind* were the most notable. Ophuijs's film was a masterly study of Klaus Barbie largely through the words (narrated) of his American and South American prisoners. The film has moments of the most terrible moments, and a dark song (soon after the war Barbie had in the house of the Brothers Grimm) which continually asserts the need for film-makers to continue documenting this history. This need was poignantly shown in *Yoon-hwa the Actor* when Debbie Goldstein returned to Poland from America to revive her family home, a fresh week had been painted on the door.

On other continents, Peter Raymond's *The World is Wrecking* detailed presence of American news crews in Nicaragua and their processing of news for prime time US television news, exposing the obvious link these programs have with real events. By contrast, Boris Yevna, who dedicated himself to filming the reality of events, turned to a more poetical vision in *A Tale of the Wind*, which is a portrait of the invisible, from Chinese desert to mountain top and film studio. Sadly, this was his last film.

(OUT OF THE PAST, THE FUTURE BEHOLD)

The Festival continued to show retrospectives, this year screening John Ford's *Six Men a Doin'*, Robert D. W. Griffith's *Way Down East*, and David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, which, to borrow from Rene Clair,



shows how a cinema which "pans down the floating aspect of people and leaves, as the real falls victim to the time it challenges?"

Leach's film is a handsome masterpiece, a study of enigmatic character as hero which details Lawrence's actions without revealing the strong motivating reasons (political or psychological) for so much beautifully filmed dramatic behaviour. Whether the motives for re-releasing restored films, their impact on film history will be significant and festivals are likely to be the main venues for presenting such important historical texts.

Briefly, three short films which exemplified the best of a promised future for cinema: Norman Hall's *Out of Town*, Alison MacLean's *Kissin' Link*, which was voted Best Short by the Festival audience, and Geoffrey Wright's *Lower Bay*. Hall's film confirms what we learn in *High Hopes*, namely that the new Screen can be an unfriendly place where those with their first couple in holes are more likely to be beaten up than helped. Wright's feature, one of the few Australian films of consequence in this Festival, quickly escapes a rather standard opening to develop an imaginative tale of love across the generations. Such films are often the beginnings of careers in festivals, and are the most difficult to produce and market, especially in the beginning of a professional life. The role of the Australian Film Commission in developing these careers was central to Peter Sainsbury's presentation of the Ian McEwan film *My Secret Garden*. While he said that "without the AFC there would not be any real site for the systematic support of new Australian talent or of its skilled personnel, and without that there would be no real industry", the AFC has been under review for the past six months. In effect, with the massive structural changes in the industry (Film Finance Corporation et al), the AFC is also at the crossroads, and in real need of a change.

Peter Sainsbury identified some of the bureaucratic obstacles that have clearly hindered creativity ("before too long what you find in this creative endeavour is being administered and managed and it's not

being supported"). The result can be, "with some very notable exceptions, a whole raft of pretty boring movies". Through the review is still taking place, the way forward seems to be a reduction in the dominating role of policy to allow greater flexibility in the workings of the AFC at all levels. If this can be sustained, then the AFC may be able to meet the noticable push for conservative cultural consensus rather than diversity.

(LAST WORDS)

One of the most significant screenings at the Festival was the four hours of advertisements ("La Main des Publicitaires"). The program was sold-out, and, if one is looking for cultural indicators for these times, this program, which brought a new audience to the Festival, is important. Sadly, the same enthusiastic response cannot be reported for Australian shorts which, again, were absent, and clearly one of the new Festival Director's tasks will be to coax Australian film back into the Festival screen. By building and expanding on a Festival 'culture', audiences may thus be encouraged to stay longer and view with more cultural tolerance some of the films easily perceived as 'difficult' (Greg Araki's *The Long Weekend*, for example). There is a need for more special programs (a retrospective of American westerns, for example), and the near absence of African film was very noticeable, and regrettable, especially after the successful AIT season last year. Lastly, the most fundamental change the Festival needs to make is a closer commitment to Asian and Oric and cinema. The 1986 program conceived by Tony Rayns remains one of the most culturally influential events in a recent Sydney Festival. As the industry and film culture enter what might be kindly called a "period of readjustment", the Festival has the opportunity, and challenge, to maintain the breadth and depth of our cinematic experience. *Sergio D. Dentini*

3 From *New Film on Black London 1961-1981* from *Win Trail*, published in *Film Australia* edited by David Talbot, Rockley, 1981

RAFFAELE CAPUTO

➤ Taking Time Out

38th Melbourne Film Festival 1989

THE 38TH MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL — 19's side row on from the Festival proper and began at a place which could a good moment of its undisturbed character of the Festival, but, because undisturbed, it comes at you as a kind of word or thought in absence of another time, a kind of juxtaposition, real and other effect.

Among the examples of disparate and disconnected images returned from the Festival, one which stands out is of a woman who recombines a particular pose within a particular setting, and it looks one to affirm a particular position in relation to the Festival. But this image does not belong to that of the moving image, instead it forms part of a photo collage. The woman entered at the bottom left of the frame, but her arms and hand extended and is gesturing at a somewhat off-centred manner. She leans back only slightly, and with her face in three-quarter profile she glances off to the left of the frame. Her neck is long, one would say, anatomic. She wears an evening dress, closely fitted, with a neck draped over her extended arm. Just over to the right and extending across to the edge of the frame, the same image is repeated a number of times along the foreground, except the gesturing arm is cut off. This woman is very familiar, her pose and gesture no doubt one has seen before. She is a representation of a representation. She is most likely a model in a pose characteristic of

fashion ads of the late Fifties or early Sixties. Yet with her duplicated figure resembles a cut-out, and her strange frozen in grey is like a photograph. All the same, her style of dress, her gesture, her look, her very component parts of good taste, of social grace, of femininity, of gamely. In short, of a lifestyle that is bourgeois.

Forming the background of the collage is a street and building which one cannot specifically place, though one can recognise it is a general sense as "European". Describable as places or public gathered up against the building is a reminder of images of a war-torn city. The building appears time-worn, decaying and unstable — its architectural lines are crisscrossed, and part of the building looks as though it is about to crumble. Slightly off centre, and as though it protrudes from the building, is the Aster Theatre's neon sign, and to the left, as though precariously suspended, is an acutely triangular blank screen with the word "outing" displayed at its apex. It too appears as if it is about to topple.

If's the image on the cover of the Festival program — a photo collage, seriously titled "Occidental Treason" by Melbourne based photographer Chris Barry. In this case, however, the "Occidental Treason" is reconstructed in order to link the work directly within the context of the Festival — the neon sign and the blank screen are two of the added, distinctive marks of and for the Film Festival.

If we can speak of an original and an altered work with both compositions are usually striking, and sensationally pleasing, though this is not our immediate concern, nor is the notion of origin, for the fact of collage already makes the notion of origin irrelevant, it is always a work in itself and an altered work at the same time. But, inside is the "Occasional Tourist" staged prior to the Festival, what becomes important here is not only that a particular image was selected and placed within the Festival context or that the Festival substance this work for its own purposes, but also that it was necessary that in some way that the Festival be identified and placed within the work itself.

Certainly, without the distinctive marks one could wonder about the choice of image, although in one respect, the marker function it's that state of such questioning. Just because of the marker that some kind of conception of the Festival becomes especially anchored, but, on the other hand, there is another sure and place, another context, which is that within the frame of the photo-collage. Though, more precisely, one should say once it is taken out, there isn't a sense of an unfolding, but of some in steyiness, and a spatializing effect of drawing back within the frame.

The result is that Barry's collage actually overviews and speaks of an atmosphere, selected, indeed, second-hand collection of ideas that the Festival more than often evokes: the nonconventional, the new, the cinema of time and quality, the rediscovered masterwork, and at the heart of these is the unspoken term, "Europe." That is to say, an idea of Europe, and "Europe" in this context cannot stand for anything other than a bourgeois ideal. In respect of the collage, however, owing to the fact that the Festival needed to be located within it, one could say the Festival no longer forms the context for something else, instead, the photo collage reverses the order of things and (re)constructs the Festival. Thus, what is original is second-hand, what is more is only more of the same, what is new is old and decaying. If in all of these are two perspectives in agreement with one another, one case is tending to turn against the other by using the other's own frame of reference.

ONE ON ONE FILM FESTIVAL

Thus said, one may wonder what film would fit the range of the Festival perfectly. If there were a perfect Festival film this year would have to be Ian Pringle's *The Prisoner of St. Petersburg*. As the program notes state, *Prisoner* is "imbued with an unmistakable European sensibility." But it's something less than a sensibility. In essence, this film is a gaudy journey into a kind of metaphysical how-to be all European filmmaker. Though it seems Pringle is "interested in being a filmmaker, he wants to be a/the director." Quote marks are essential here.

Prisoner concerns the debauched, nocturnal wanderings of a man of supposed results through the after dark streets of Berlin. At the centre of this trio is Jack (Noah Taylor) whose sense of reality is poisoned by 19th century vapors, his mind seized by the literary imaginings of Gogol and Dostoyevsky. With the Russian character as an centre, *Prisoner* is in a way an ode to German expressionism. But it's an expressionism gone flat, for the sense of modernism or modernism that it seems to color has to be caused by an appearance not of black and white photography and overexposed scene pictures. And the problem is that this is all in an over-be-overdetermined and appearance — for it only calls attention to itself, it's an edited rather than an expressive style. It's a diluted sensibility which betrays that a few overdone, loose details such as shooting at oblique angles in characteristic effect is the hallmark of an expressionist visual style.

On a one-on-one basis, if there were a sort of sub-on-the-back composition piece on *Prisoner* of St. Petersburg I would have to say it would be Bruce Weber's documentary *Human on Char Baker, Let's Go East*. Perhaps it's a superficial comparison, but through Weber's use of black and white photography in working the brooding, time-chilled looks of Baker (dressed nearly in black) in the often civil-white, often, oblique compositions, *Let's Go East* could be entitled *Let's Go West*.

It's a documentary, sure, but there's still every chance of роман entering Baker in the way that Pringle personifies the alienated Weber's compositions and style are not affected to the point that they become cliché, but rather form a jagged identity of textures in shifting focus, yes, the glamour of a film can be visually photographic Baker of the Fifth, to composition made up of sharp contours and lines, to the



ONE ON ONE FILM FESTIVAL: IAN PRINGLE'S *THE PRISONER OF ST. PETERSBURG* IS A JAGGED IDENTITY OF TEXTURES.

astounding effects of other extreme close-ups on Edgery hand held shot. There's a kind of movement of texture replacing texture in this film, and in all this there's a search for Baker. But it doesn't seem possible to extricate Baker from it, he forms a part of it, he gets lost within it. Oddly enough, one could probably place it next to Nick Brownfield's *Driving My Group*, essentially because the kind of madness both these films proved upon is a genuine, everyday kind.

HIT AND RUN

Now, if we could proceed further on a one-on-one basis, another would be easy, but so much luck. The Festival this year was such a policy pledge of programming that it seemed to reflect a cultural policy based on a fun and run mentality. The retrospectives, for instance, were inevitably titled: the films of Mike Leigh, the renowned 1934 sound film *The Bat Whispers*, Fritz Lang's *The Big Heat* and Nick Ray's *In A Lonely Place*, an Indonesian film *The Rungging Dancer*, the National Film Board of Canada *Tribute*, and finally the George Kuchar retrospectives.

Programming retrospectives implies that there is an importance in re-calling these films, significance in looking back at them even if it's the first time. Therefore, they should share a special and equal status. Yet, their position in the program suggests otherwise. The Kuchar and Leigh retrospectives were in the comparative program at the State Film Center. The others were all featured as part of the main program, yet, there were some significant disparities: the Canada *Tribute* had a once-only weekday screening at noon, *The Rungging Dancer* a once-only Saturday morning screening, *The Big Heat* and *In A Lonely Place* also had a once-only screening, but an evening session where all patrons had to buy separate tickets. But what is the context for having these films as retrospectives? With *The Big Heat* and *In A Lonely Place*, for instance, what, apart from their being new 35mm prints, is the rationale for their screening and for the way they were screened? It's a question I cannot begin to answer without being offensive.

However, what's worse than the inconsequential of the program is the overall mediocrity of the entire program. Usually in past years there is at least a handful of feature films that makes the event something of an event, though this year there is not one which can be said to eclipse a set of others. Instead, they seem to be all set in one long unexcited strip. (Though in closing, I feel the need to at least nod toward two short documentaries: a student film titled *Let's Go East* and David Casari's *Body Work*.) The Festival, despite an complementary and accurate counterpoint awareness from the main program, will always be something of a white elephant event because it's so deliberately a showcase for a particular kind of film culture without wanting to be either deliberate or particular about it, and, even more so, because this is a seemingly non-ideological.



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Keeping it alive to the last second

• Digital Film Sound at Albert Studios

BRUCE BROWN AND RUSSELL DUNLOP HAVE LEARNED THEIR CRAFT FROM THE BEST FILM POST-PRODUCTION PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS, SUCH AS THREE-TIME ACADEMY-AWARD-WINNER MARK BERGER (APOCALYPSE NOW) AND TOMLINSON HOLMAN, CHIEF

AUDIO ENGINEER AT LUCASFILM AND DESIGNER OF THE THX SYSTEM. YET, BRUCE AND RUSSELL STILL CONSIDER THEMSELVES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LEARNING CURVE.

WHEN Bruce and Russell show visitors to Albert Studios their latest reel (with eight inserts of shots at work taken on their video 8), you realize that they are learning from these top sound men by working backwards, learning from lessons gained analyzing the work of the best film soundtracks released on VHS. The reel has segments from commercially available surround-encoded tapes of *RoboCop* and *Pelagius*, with examples of their own work that shows the same technically accomplished mixes. The surround sound leaps around the walls of the mixing suite, and the digital audio quality from the big monitor speakers acts sharply through the

floor. For sometimes after leaving, I was juggling the arguments for speakers versus video and digital, but I am left with the feeling that the changes they are making to the way we are accustomed to work are inevitable. The other feeling I had was that I wanted to work there then because they honestly expressed fun and enthusiasm for creative filmmaking.

BACKGROUND, MUSIC

Russell was the first to talk about it, when I talked about friends I have with home video sound disorders and surround speaker systems in their living rooms, and of being tripped into sitting for hours listening to the latest features at full volume as they show off the equipment. "I don't mind, because I can watch movies all day, every day. I have hundreds of them. I sometimes think I'll end up like Howard Hughes watching *Le Saint* and *Le Dernier*. I like pictures, and once I get involved with a few bits and pieces, I started to really analyze the guy. And you know how that destroys the movie: way of looking at movies. It's like the joy of just playing music compared to having to record it, something goes out of it."

Russell had been playing drums in bands for years with people like Ramon Geyer. When women playing he decided that he'd try the other side of the microphone with Bruce. They started to produce albums together for MCA as *Anything*, John English and Kevin Knoch, work they modestly call "reasonably successful." They put out some of their own records "using bodgy names, a bit of fun."

While it was often fun, it became tiring. "After two or so albums," as Russell said, "it was becoming repetitive, like doing a single show every night. So, we decided to get into the pictures." Having done a lot of TV commercial music tracks, they liked the feeling that with film there was always something to learn, and that it was somehow more "professional." That is, Russell believes, "probably because there is so

much more at stake on the initial point. You can possibly afford to lose \$50,000 on a record, but you can't make a movie for that. The pressure to deliver good work is stimulating."

The combination of their engineering and engineering talent seems to be appreciated. They mixed the music for *Crescental Dancers* at the studio and, after supplying the final tracks, they received a letter from the film's American music editor saying, "Whatever you get going, don't change it." A lot of people have commented on the wide stereo image on *Dancers* as being very noticeable in the theatre.

SPROCKET! WHAT SPROCKET!

Clearly admitting they did another feature whose the voice-over, music and mix have all been done under the best roof. It was the well-known/home feature, *See Us Now*. The film's director, Gary Keady, enjoyed working in an environment similar to his music background. There is still some scepticism about mixing to video but on the whole the Americans have embraced the idea, Bruce believes. "There is a producer coming out to do a movie who wants to work that way, realizing that it's cheaper and faster. It means the director driving someone back the music and the driving someone else to hear the effects laid up. He can walk around here and keep his eye on it." And it seems to help improve the liaison between the departments.

Russell admits that there is a lot of emotional resistance to the move to mixing to video, going digital and not using sprocketed magnetic tracks. "There's a bit of the *Hangover* about it all, like when digital came in and people said, 'I can hear the top and separating off.' And as more instances you could, but the new generation of equipment is so good you can't hear it. And you only have to listen to some old analogue stuff to find it sounds like listening through thirty feet of water. The digital clarity is unbelievable, if that's what you're after. A lot of people say they like tape compression, and I don't mind it either... on drum kits!"

Russell agrees that, "A lot of people are sceptical, until they sit down and see what we've done... and how rapidly. They were impressed."

"The other thing they comment on is the avoidance of all the dubbing of the sprockets, and being able to keep it all contained in a

digital format. It is also an advantage to have a minimal amount of people working on their job, instead of the usual cast of thousands working in the sound department. I get stories from blocks that have had to move on the normal type set-ups where they get it down to a few tracks as they run and yet there still are crystal clear about the guy who shoves up and down the right knobs."

I asked if they thought it was just a unique applied to the need to make the huge theatre movements. Russell answered, "A lot of people think that unless you have a big theatre you'll lose some of that perspective, and they could be right, but if the audio end of the mix is inferior, then you lose what you might pick up. And most of the set-ups in theaters are pretty unimpaired anyway."

The process they have followed to make sure that their tracks work in theaters also shows the strange mix of expertise and enthusiasm.

Ted Albert, "the boss" and owner of the studio, has a theatre underneath his house. It has Stereo CinemaScope, with one of the passive matrix track film audio devices, a discrete four track magnetic unit. He also has pairs of significant movies like *Across the World in 80 Days*. Bruce describes that big theatre as about the same size as Colorfil's showing theatre and they used to try out their first mixes in it. But their main experience came "when normally we played out on that have all the recorded material on them and copied the sound. We found movies that had soundtracks we liked and tried to match how they had done them."

ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL

Although they have always had Fairbanks in the music studios, about a year ago they bought a Series III Fairlight CMI that they found worked well as a sound effect track laying device. It also fitted well into the overall mix of the studios towards being fully digital, and it gave them the idea that the facility might be attractive for film people. Having already had experience with sound and picture interfaces with commercials, they believed by using video "we didn't need speakers." When Russell and Bruce mentioned getting a Dolby or UltraStereos encoder unit, Ted Albert agreed. They purchased a Sony video projector and put a rear-projection screen over the window into the main studio. With an UltraStereos unit, they then had the ability to

lead.

"It's pretty controllable, but there are times when the encoder goes haywire, at which it's writing it down, and suddenly the ear speakers burst into life and everything's pouring out the back." He laughed about "the few lightning moments until you get it set properly."

There is some rivalry between manufacturers of the surround sound system and quite a few recent movies have had UltraStereos mixtures in the tracks rather than the familiar Dolby logo. Although Dolby Labs did the early work in designing the system, they lost the mix to per project and will not sell them.

UltraStereos started in California making units to compete with the Dolby CP50 decoders in theaters, and through their success began to make encoders. Russell explains that there is a modified theatre playback system "that fits onto a road case and works very well. When we get it fitted toms and punk noise into the different channels and just keep it going round in circles. When I took it to California I could see they were impressed by the lack of bleed from front to back and between left and right. I don't know if it's better than the Dolby, but it seemed to be completely comparable. And it saves the five to six thousand dollar bonus for the Dolby, which is probably not a big part of the budget, but it means the producer can spend it elsewhere."

"I don't know how they got around the Dolby patents, but the local Dolby agent was going to leave his DSA unit in here until his London office heard that we had the UltraStereos and they pulled it out."

THE HARDWARE

The desk is a 56 channel SSL standard console that they are having modified to match the one at Lucasfilm for which SSL has designed a special passing system for the surround sound. With the modifications, switching it to read automatically matches all the buses to the correct channels. The output is to one or more of their four Sony PCM 3324 Digital multi-track tape recorders, machines that are building a leg following in the industry.

"They're excellent", Russell believes, "for film people say, 'What if you want to slip something a few frames?' Or they want to add or chop something. 'When do we do without speakers?' they ask. That happened quite a few times with the last film and it is just a simple matter. We can lock any number of the Sony tape machines together whether

own CTL/control track, and, when it is synchronized to the picture, transfer all the sound to a new 24 track tape with the new sequences added or removed." This can be done any number of times without losing quality or increasing gear costs because of the digital format.

Bruce explained the final part of the process. "We transfer the recorded tracks onto a U-matic PCM. Because the 24 track Sony Digital machines are basically video machines, you can put video colour black onto them and they can be phase-locked to the video machine. We can then machine

over to Colorfilm and they feed a Polaron film signal from a Magna and the U-matic video input. You hear the U-matic slow and a phase lock, and then they transfer it to mag. You can actually go direct to the mag if you are confident, but they usually like to run it as a double lead to check that the transfer is correct."

There was a hint in his voice that there was some resistance to change when he said, "I'm sure that there was more than a little suspicion about these rock and rollers being able to get it right."



people fall surround sound

"The UltraStereos", Russell explains, "is a Dolby patch except you can buy it. It encodes in real time the four final tracks of the mix. Mainly music/dialogue comes from the center, then three centre left and centre right which are used for panning sound. You never get a true stereo image on anything, although it can go from one side of the screen to the other, and in the threshold of the mix it throws the sound to the rear speakers. That's when the chatter goes roaring over your

With such a big equipment investment, I asked if they believed that the savings in time make the costs comparable to conventional methods. Bruce offered their work on *Star of Steel* as an example. "The final run on *Star of Steel* took one twenty-four track, and we did the it in about four days because of the pre-mixes. We had actually mixed it once before when they wanted to take it to last year's Cannes Festival. They rushed it and said, 'Let's mix it now.' That was just happen because we had two twenty-four tracks running and I just put the limiter on the end and said, 'Here we go.' After Cannes, they came back and we then did it properly."

"As an afterthought, they said that they wanted stereo for the overseas market. They took only three hours to do, because you put the reels up and turn the automation on with the dialogue switched out and put it in run. I'm sure that would have been a bigger debate with film reels."

"Some of *Star of Steel* pop music tracks as well as scored, mostly synthesizer, music. As well there were four sound effects tracks, some incidental stuff and the dialogue tracks. These were all grouped so that you only had to control about four faders, rather than having a monstrous console with four men hanging on it. With automation it is all so comfortable, and by only one man. It seems strange to me that so many of the mixing set-ups, most money in the States, don't use automation in their desks. It seems so old world."

DIGITAL, TOTALLY DIGITAL

The time someone on the production when duty moved even farther towards the digital. Bruce had begun doing the dialogue replacement with a multi-track synchronized to the video, and quickly discovered that the process "give him the hammer." All synchronizers take some time to lock up and the delay between takes throws the actors' timing off. Bruce's solution was to get a totally digital sampling recorder called AudioFile. Instead of two-tape machines having to submix, the AudioFile tracks the video constantly.

To use it, Bruce explains, "You just run the video a few times for the actor and then spool the video back a few seconds before the take and run it. The AudioFile will save to many takes as you like and its samples are all time-code related. Before the actor left I'd set down and edit them all together, scrapping the best ones into one complete scene. We maybe had to go back and record something that wasn't what we wanted or if the sync was a bit out. Usually you would just tip individual words and then lock it up and dump it into the multi-track."

"More of the actors in *Star of Steel* were amateur but the professionals that we used were just knocked out by the speed of working that way. While it was hot in their minds they were back at it. I can remember standing out in a big theatre watching post syncing being done to film and thinking how laborious it was. We did stuff where the actor was in suit out in half an hour because you could say, 'That was right but you were just a bit early on the whole delivery', and quickly flip just that bit into sync."

"We were just about to buy an AudioFile, but they were in the order of \$150,000, so we will hang on, let's see how the movie thing goes and I'm glad we did. Now there are about five other manufacturers of audio 'work stations' as they're called, all with different software approaches but basically doing the same job. I've kept track of them and when Fairlight and that they were doing a direct-to-disk version, we bought all the hardware for it although we knew that the software needed some work. It cost about \$40,000 to upgrade and then they went bankrupt."

Ryn Ryan and Peter Vogel have managed to convert Fairlight, and Bruce, like a lot of other musicians, is glad to hear that they are back. The disk based post production system is slated for release at the October AES Show.

"All these manufacturers are pushing theirs for sound effects. But



"THEY FOUND ME ON THE END OF THE LINE
FROM THE TWENTY FOUR TRACK, AND WE
DO IT DIRECTLY FROM THE REELS BECAUSE OF THE
PRE-MIXES, WE HAD ACTUALLY MIXED STEREO
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- BRUCE BROWN

there are differences between a sampled sound like the Fairlight, which is in RAM, and a direct-to-disk recording where you can't manipulate the disk recording. They can do a few things like fade, and as the AES has an audio you can do a lot of a mix. With the sound effects in samples in RAM on the Fairlight, they can be fired off at any point. And you also have all the power of the manipulation. Patch change, branch on them, and edit them. Russell said it is to do things by sampling three or four footsteps, putting them in RAM, copying them and then lay all the steps up as sync, with changes on their pitch and levels. That's something that the disk-based recording machines can't do."

When the studios were busy and Bruce needed to cut dialogue, he used to put the AudioFile on the boot of his car and take it home on the weekend. He said, "I sit there with headphones on and actually edit the dialogue and replacement dialogue sequences together, even sampling a bit of ambient sound and laying it up with the new bits. Most times you don't need to use pictures because you know it's unique. I made Betamax VCR to watch it and the AudioFile just made code and fired off at the right points. It seems odd that someone splitting up of dialogue tracks on magnetic into apparent mix and laying up ambient sound in the gaps. Often the words will be replaced later and all you are doing is providing a reference. Of course, on film it's pretty cheap to have a couple of speakers and an automatic speaker. We are using equipment that costs a couple of hundred grand, but I believe that we do it so much quicker, and only split things when it's necessary."

FEELING THE MUSIC

Bruce knows that it is difficult for people to get the feel of the theatre, even when they are mixing, in a room that they were happy to use for music. He also talks of some of the mistakes they made at first, by treating the mix like a music session where they would wind up the volume for the bits they liked and then had trouble finding levels. I commented that that seemed to be a common approach to musicians even producing music tracks for TV commercials.

"The first that Gary Slaby also came from a music background meant that we were all in it, so that when a song came on we had a loud and then when the dialogue came in it was dropped back. The first mix we made to get the film to Cannes, we didn't see it until three was a year done and it was gone. [Gary was writing at Columbia at six o'clock for the print and was on a plane an hour later with the reels under his arm.]

"When we heard it later we cracked up, a half dozen of us went to a restaurant in Hollywood and there was the mix of us sitting in the middle of the dinner. In the scene where they were out on the case where the narrator was, we suddenly had all this water noise coming out of the surround speaker that we've loaded that you couldn't hear the dialogue! But we've loaded a lot."

And they are both still optimistic about the future. Bruce believes that, "Our record industry is no different to our movie industry. We are going along in a similar vein and, just as our records have started to take off overseas, so will our movies on a more regular basis. Australians can make a dollar go a lot further than other people. We have to get the music."

"We've just agreed for another film that I've got a pretty good budget and an American pre-sale. We've set down with the sound recorder to work out what equipment's compatible and what we can pitch in to make it all work better on site. Again, it's the difference between the young guys on the way up and those who have been around for years. For those experts, I would never presume to tell them how to do it, but in the end, if we can make the recorder's work sound better, we all look good. And digital is the way to go. I think that having the ability of keeping it slow to that has amazed us pretty exciting."

• New Perspex Underwater Housing for Arri II

UNDERWATER CAMERA HOUSINGS available for rental are not common to most cinematographers who specialise in this work here, their own custom-made gear. Locally, I only knew of the Al Giddings housing that was made for *The Deep*, which only takes an Arri II-C, and you have to maintain Panasonic spherical or anamorphic lenses. Soundhouse has a number of fibreglass cases that have been built with Samson by local camera people. Most of these are for the ARRI III but are limited to 300 ft exposures. Special changes also require the camera to come out of the housing and they use the lighter and shorter-life Arri SR batteries. There are some metal casings that allow you to go down to about eight feet, but they seem very clumsy.

Ian Jones, Melbourne Australian operator and cameraman, believed that there was an area for developing a commercially acceptable housing that overcame these limitations. The result can be judged from the photos and from its use on *Twinkle in Paradise* and *The Hunting*.

Ian explained that he wanted to have a video split available. "That caused some problems because I liked the idea of the convertible standard used at 45 degrees instead of having an eyepiece at the rear of the housing. Working that way means you are tucked so close to the camera, which gives you more control."

The answer came about six months ago in the new video split that works with the convertible door, and, with the assistance of Cameraquip, Ian was able to include this in the final construction. "Soundhouse has helped me a lot", Ian said, "in the camera's capability of taking the C series anamorphic lenses from 20mm to 240mm. They used II series lenses on *The Hunting* and they tried it."

Ian felt that Roadward Films appreciated the video split ability. "Because it was a main unit shoot, I was set up in the pool and they could come across, put their people in the pool, shoot it and walk away. The director and DOP didn't have to get into the water, which often is the only way to get a feel for it. They could look at the monitor and

say, 'Well', and put call for a gun left or right."

Being able to change the speed control on the Arri III required the ability to move the small knurled knob under the camera. Instead, Ian opted for the electronic speed control (his didn't want to put it underneath as the camera with 4000 ft magazine in place already sat up quite high). Any modifications to the device would have taken away its instant compatibility. Ian was on a shoot in the U.K. "where I went to Bruce and Sawyer and they had a second-hand variable-speed control unit. It was only capital at 24 and 25 frames, but for the purpose it was fine. It had a long accessible shaft that we incorporated into the design and it will push the new Arri IIIa to 125 f.p.s."

The weight and displacement was also carefully worked out. "There's no wet", Ian explained, "in having a housing that when the camera is added will sink to the bottom. It has turned out to need about two to three pounds of trim weight to hold it down, and that's with an anamorphic, two batteries and the variable speed. Each time you change lenses you have to make some adjustments, and I like it to be slightly negatively buoyant."

There are expensive video connections available for underwater but Ian was worried of firing something, sold to the housing that was to be constantly plugged and removed. They came up with the alternative of putting a port on the side with an O-ring and physically running the cable through this with the O-rings and brass fittings. "When you use the cable you put the port on and clamp it, and run the cable up to the surface. There is a dummy port if you don't need the split. The option we are developing is for the operator to also use a video monitor as a viewfinder."

As well as all that, it is made to sit on the tripod, has follow focus and iris adjustments, and takes a 9.8 mm Rokinon lens, which, Ian says, looks terrific and behaves as unique in the housings available in Australia.

The housing is available through Ian Jones, pictured below with the real piece of equipment.



PHOTO BY GARY HARRIS

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WWE AND BOMBFRANCE

Pamela Casillas	6	Pamela Casillas	8
Brian Courts	6	Brian Courts	8
Mike Harris	4	Mike Harris	3
Barbara Hooks	6	Barbara Hooks	6
Karen Latco	5	Karen Latco	8
Robin Oliver	5	Robin Oliver	9
Dennis Pryor	4	Dennis Pryor	
Kevin Sadler	7	Kevin Sadler	6
Gerr Sutton	6	Gerr Sutton	8
Paul Wicks	7	Paul Wicks	7

1 STREET

Pamela Casillas	6	Pamela Casillas	7
Brian Courts	5	Brian Courts	7
Mike Harris	8	Mike Harris	6
Barbara Hooks	8	Barbara Hooks	9
Karen Latco	8	Karen Latco	7
Robin Oliver	5	Robin Oliver	-
Dennis Pryor	4	Dennis Pryor	-
Kevin Sadler	6	Kevin Sadler	6
Gerr Sutton	7	Gerr Sutton	6
Paul Wicks	4	Paul Wicks	8

CHINA BEACH

Pamela Casillas	7	Pamela Casillas	6
Brian Courts	7	Brian Courts	5
Mike Harris	7	Mike Harris	5
Barbara Hooks	7	Barbara Hooks	2
Karen Latco	6	Karen Latco	5
Robin Oliver	6	Robin Oliver	4
Dennis Pryor	5	Dennis Pryor	3
Kevin Sadler	7	Kevin Sadler	7
Gerr Sutton	7	Gerr Sutton	5
Paul Wicks	8	Paul Wicks	4

THIRTYSOMETHING

Pamela Casillas	-	Pamela Casillas	8
Brian Courts	8	Brian Courts	7
Mike Harris	8	Mike Harris	6
Barbara Hooks	8	Barbara Hooks	4
Karen Latco	6	Karen Latco	6
Robin Oliver	1	Robin Oliver	3
Dennis Pryor	6	Dennis Pryor	-
Kevin Sadler	7	Kevin Sadler	8
Gerr Sutton	-	Gerr Sutton	7
Paul Wicks	6	Paul Wicks	7

BE THE POWER THE PASSION

Pamela Casillas	1
Brian Courts	1
Mike Harris	3
Barbara Hooks	2
Karen Latco	5
Robin Oliver	4
Dennis Pryor	6
Kevin Sadler	3
Gerr Sutton	3
Paul Wicks	1

BOOTS LOST

Pamela Casillas	8
Brian Courts	8
Mike Harris	3
Barbara Hooks	6
Karen Latco	8
Robin Oliver	9
Dennis Pryor	
Kevin Sadler	6
Gerr Sutton	8
Paul Wicks	7

PRISONER

Pamela Casillas	7
Brian Courts	7
Mike Harris	6
Barbara Hooks	9
Karen Latco	7
Robin Oliver	-
Dennis Pryor	-
Kevin Sadler	6
Gerr Sutton	6
Paul Wicks	8

MUSKOH IMPOSSIBLE

Pamela Casillas	6
Brian Courts	5
Mike Harris	5
Barbara Hooks	2
Karen Latco	5
Robin Oliver	4
Dennis Pryor	3
Kevin Sadler	7
Gerr Sutton	5
Paul Wicks	4

RISQUE

Pamela Casillas	8
Brian Courts	7
Mike Harris	6
Barbara Hooks	4
Karen Latco	6
Robin Oliver	3
Dennis Pryor	-
Kevin Sadler	8
Gerr Sutton	7
Paul Wicks	7

CRITIC CHOICE

Pamela Casillas, *Jack The Rapper* - 9; Brian Courts, *The Big Gig* - 1; Mike Harris, *Wagway* - 3; Karen Latco, *Remember* - 7; Robin Oliver, *Blind Justice* - 8; Dennis Pryor, *Blind Justice* - 8; Kevin Sadler, *Jack The Rapper* - 8; Gerr Sutton, *Paul Kane* - 8.

THIS ISSUE: SWEETIE, DEAD POETS SOCIETY,
FONZA, LOVER BOY, BATMAN, GEORGINA AND
NEW YORK STORIES



ABOVE

KAT BAKER (CAMPION):
ETHICALITY AND SUBTLETY
DETAIL: IN JANE CAMPION'S
COMMONLY HAUNTING
SWEETIE

SWEETIE

JANE CAMPION
AND ADAM NEWMAN

JANE CAMPION'S *Sweetie* is an uncommonly haunting Australian feature film. It takes more interesting risks, more consciously, than virtually any other Australian feature of recent memory, even independent-minded ones like *Tender Hearts* or *Milk*. Doubtless, what makes it interesting to us is what will damn it in the eyes of some others: a certain all-pervading tone and quality of immolation, nihilism, uncertainty. It's a film that ordered (to use the precious parlance of space-mongers) "doesn't work," doesn't hold together. It's the opposite of the 'organic' film, a work in which style, theme and narrative mutually support and express each other. *Sweetie* forever multiplies its themes, and drifts in such a way that it constantly displaces its center of interest. Thus, the film sensuously evokes that brutal condemnation, casually performed by reviewers and earnestly recog-

nized by scriptwriting manuals, down into a single, simple, three sentence "harshness angle" or statement of thematic intent.

Campion's own comments on when the film is "about", in interviews and elsewhere, are in fact as numerous and diffuse as they are curious. But perhaps one of her remarks provides a general, 'topical' orientation: "I felt ultimately that I wanted to do something modern... something about the 'Eighties'" (*Cinema Papers*, May 1989). As in the works of a recent generation of Americans — Jarmusch, Wang, Cox, Lynch — what seems to matter most to Campion is the successful evocation of a certain contemporary sensibility, a particular time, relating to the 'feel' of modern life, how individuals perceive it as affective terms. If this sensibility risks court- ing a fragmentation and wayward drifting at the very heart of the film and its construction, then so be it: how else to portray a world defined, as a fundamentally brutal and everyday lived, by alienation, immolation and intention?

Swenne focuses, in a gear Australian tradition, on the lives of 'ordinary' people, whilst (dis)happily managing to avoid the canonical film-school approach of 'suburban principles', with its petty, satirical tone of moral superiority. It quickly weighs up deep, subterranean horrors (and repressed impulses against disastrously successful surface interactions and reconciles. There is, under the beauty, a guilty sense of semi-killing, as if the characters are taking themselves, somehow made. Is this really happening to me? Moreover, it is as if the significance of any single event may well be lost on the characters themselves – for this is a world in which 'meaning' holds little sway, in which a much like meaning could never really pay off.

Thus Swenne poses delicate problems for audiences or critics who would focus on an array of 'themes', its complicated meanings. The film suggests a system of pressures which involves an intrusion in age old, essentially human questions, but in a way that is not absolute, not open to identity, chance, absurdity. The themes are many – but they neither explain the film (and its emotional effect) satisfactorily, nor do they form a particularly coherent, structured pattern of themselves.

The film is, from one angle, about women and female sexuality. Swenne clearly divides the world of women from the world of men. It is the women – Kay (Karen Colston), Flo (Dorothy Barry) and Swenne (Gemma Leman) – who inevitably get things moving, who take action and force change, while the men – principally Leon (Tom Lyons) and Gordon (Jon Darling) – accordingly sit there, somewhat passively moved around. On a deeper level, the film suggests two dialectically opposed feminine archetypes – the which like Kay, with her secrets and experiments, her ethereal and cultivated desires, communicating subtly with the inner force of Swenne's dominant and unflinching libido, her absolute dependence on male love.

From another angle, the film is a 'comedy of remarriage'. This term has recently been used to encompass all those stories that deal with the human problem of whether couples (not necessarily married in the legal sense) can rebuild a deep, binding love that has gone somewhat cold or weary after the first flames of passion and/or consummation. There are two 'remarriages' at stake in Swenne – Kay and Leon's, Gordon and Flo's. From this interpretative point of view, Swenne's character function is to be the catalyst – if not the sacrificial scapegoat – that enables these couples to renegotiate their relationships, she is the 'combedesque' figure who turns the normal world upside down in order that it possibly be renewed, re-evaluated. Interestingly, Swenne is here not so much an actual feminine figure, as a traditionally masculine mythological one – the angel/devil figure, the Terrence Stamp in Pasolini's *Torrey* or Sigmund Freud and Freud, who exits from the tale as frequent, quietly and abruptly as he/she entered it, leaving, weakened in ambiguous devotion. The evil priest of 'remarriage' in Carpenter's film is

extremely sensitive and fragile, once again haunted by ambiguity, as in Swenne's final transcendental affirmation: "Love me with all of your heart...".

Swenne is also about family life. The level of meaning is more 'grounded' and thus less allegorical or mythological than the others. The film has much to do with the cluttered emotional 'baggage' that people carry around in the everyday lives. It suggests the recognizable ball of family life, and the painful inevitability of children mirroring the complexities of their parents. Swenne, in this structure, has another set of functions. She is the one who has been most immediately screwed up by this particular nuclear family – complex with a suggested father-daughter incest dependency. But paradoxically, it is she who is experienced by the other characters as more burden than victim, as a her death which allows a sense of release, or extraordinary relief, from the ball of family life.

The film has a very special plot structure which encourages the 'debking' of any interpretation. Owing something, perhaps, to the loose 'road movie' structure of the 1970s, Swenne deliberately possesses no narrative centre, as simple, moving, driving force. The film plants the 'story' idea that both life and narrative are (as should be) at the mercy of sudden moves and interruptions that inaugurate unexpected imperatives: someone knocks on the door and moves in for good, a phone call from interstate prompts an unplanned journey/holiday. Doubtless discouraging to some tastes, the film lurches through a series of large scale displacements, and every new 'move' seems to relocate the same possibilities. (Perhaps only the bizarre 'outback' section of the film is too elliptical and hallucinatory to be accommodated in any reading.) More than most film, Swenne challenges one with the question of 'where it's coming from'.

The style of Swenne, particularly its visual style, is in many respects a total success – a perpetual, floating, quite subconscious 'evril' like everything else in the film. Here, Carpenter reaches the height of his experiments in taking, for no comparable Australian feature has had the same courage to so utterly jettison the conventions of a 'classical' or mainstream shooting style. Carpenter's pictorial style is already unmistakable, perhaps even rigidly so: those popping, static compositions which place a close-up head in one corner, while some weirdly angled angles of space fill the rest of the frame, the bright, unusual, hard-edge colour configurations; the dropping of a few fragile beams or speckles of light in a dark interior.

This sense of style is risky because bottom so much in 'classical' terms or 'mainstream' such character, such shot, such scene into separated little blocks or cells, it effectively rules out the possibility of a 'flowing' on-screen, dramatic moments that carefully swirl up and the very, and ensemble acting. There is also, perhaps unfortunately, as an theme reduction due to inherent in Carpenter's visual style, which has an awkward dramatic

effect, but is rather fully laid on, lacking in modulation or complexity. What the overall style achieves, however, is certainly rewarding, strange, modern rhythms, a truly unusual sense, and an irregular flow which is both pleasantly calm and even, but full of any moment-to-moment surprises. Aside all of that, there is a limited, often silent, mysterious soundtrack, where elements such as the cappella songs come to play an ambiguous, shifting role – perhaps an ironic commentary on events, perhaps exposure of deep truths, perhaps just an odd sound, affective touch.

Tellingly, Swenne has failed to be nominated in either 'Best Screenplay' or 'Best Director' categories in this year's AFI Awards. It thus joins the list of very interesting low-budget features that have attracted general disapproval or indifference from the mainstream of our beloved 'industry'. Yet it is precisely because these marginal films contradict the industry's mediocre norms – the liberal notions of worthy content, the logically unfulfilled understandings of classical form – that they should be highly prized. In a very modest sense these films are ground-breaking. The flat and homogeneous landscape of Australian cinema is disturbed by their incongruous presence. We might cautiously hope that this growing body of films, whose only common thread is heterogeneity and difference, might generate some movement in the dried up mainstream.

SWENNE. Directed by Jane Campion. Producer John Maynard. Screenplay Jane Campion, Gerald Lee. Director of photography Sally Douglas. Edit: Ian Verman. Music Producer designer Peter Harris. Music: Martin Armiger. Sound: Les Ball. Cost: Garry Leman. (Lionel/Gordon), Karen Colston (Kay), Tom Lyons (Leon), Jon Darling (Gordon), Dorothy Barry (Flo), Michael Lake (Bob), Andrew Pinnock (Clayton). Production company: Arena. Distribution: Telopea. 85 min. 97 min. Australia, 1989.

DEAD POETS SOCIETY

BRIAN MC FARLANE

THERE IS A LONG and honourable tradition of films about the life of a classroom full of dedicated teachers, stretching back at least 50 years to *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (1939) and including, as recently as *Stand and Deliver* (1988). Peter Weir's new film, *Dead Poets Society*, involves echoes of many such films, as well of others such as Lindsay Anderson's *J.G.* (1960), Larry Posen's *A Separate Peace* (1973) and Weir's own *Power of Imagination* (1974) which all raise questions of a whole oppressive system of education. *Dead Poets Society* is a film with a rich intertextuality: as well as the film and games already referred to, it includes W.H. Auden's, another study of young lives threatened and haunted in the prisons of their being opened up, and Robert Cormor's three young men of managers in conflict with the key institutions of their lives, not to mention Dickens' *Hard Times*.

My point in invoking these other names is not to suggest that *Dead Poets Society* lacks a distinctive flavour: but that it is intensely marked by the encounters it sets up. In



relation to Weir's own film, there are clear elements of intimacy: the romantic and sexual burgeoning in odds with the institutional pressures of the college in *Pinkie*, the pain of innocence betrayed in *Calliepie*, is thematic, using the counterpointing of visual and oral beauty with the threat of rejection both and in *Bluesie*. Remarkably lit by John Seale, Weir's most frequent cinematographer, the beauty of the fall sliding into winter in *Delaware* (standing in for Vermont) takes the breath away. But it is not merely beautiful, not merely pictorial. In a part of the film's drama that it should look as it does, but it provides a powerful contrast with the regime associated with Welton Academy where whatever is natural is in the process of being repressed. The image of the boy Todd (Ethan Hawke) vomiting in the snow encapsulates the opposition at the film's heart, so too do those shots of flights of birds in graceful ascents, reinforcing our sense of the constricted lives the school wants to engender.

Where *Appledy College* and *Hanging Rock* signified the two controlling principles at work in *Pinkie*, in *Dead Poets Society* it is the Academy and the cave, the morning place for the regimented society, which symbolize the conflicting responses to life at the film's heart. The lessons which are borne into the opening assembly for the autumn term spell out the four watchwords of Welton: tradition, honor, discipline and excellence, and, shortly afterwards, these are good naturally practiced in the bedrooms of one of the boys. They are more seriously called into question by the arrival of English teacher, John Keating (Robin Williams), a former Harvard graduate of the Academy who carries the film's notion that education should change lives. Change and excellence. Keating's motto is "Carpe diem. Seize the day. Make your lives extraordinary."

Williams, more restrained than usual, projects convincingly the inspired, charismatic usage the role needs to account for Keating's effect on the boys. He is entirely scrupulous on a personal level, less so on the professional level. This is the faith of the writing (and Tom Schulman's screenplay is often locally very sharp) the notion of a life-changing teaching is romantic but not necessarily false. However, it needs to be shown rather than simply asserted. The glimpses we are given of Keating's classroom methods are enough to establish him as someone who might be able to teach literature. There is a surprising 360° shot of Keating's attempts to get Todd to open up to class which tells us some things about his psychological insight but there is nothing comparable to show how he might make a Shakespearean sonnet accessible to the class.

This quibble registered, it must be said that Keating and the rites of the Dead Poets Society associated with him and its own morning place work satisfactorily on a structural level.

That is, they stand clearly for one half of the central narrative opposition: that of liberating impulse to self-expression, on the one hand, and the deadly weight of parental and school expectations on the other. About halfway through the film one begins to feel as points are being too easily made. The rest of the Academy's staff are either cynical or stiffly conventional, if not indeed sadistic like the principal (Norman Lloyd), the parents too eagerly acquiescent in the Academy's cramping edicts; only Keating, the students' friend, undercuts.

Then, rather suddenly and unexpectedly, the film's tone deepens and darkens. When Neil Perry (Robert Sean Leonard) tells Keating that he has defied his father's wishes and gone on with his performance of *Pinkie* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* it seems hardly as if the conflict for Neil has been too easily solved, as if Keating's influence has been too clearcut. The play's perils mixed with touching pathos and seriousness, the boy's father watches from the back of the theater, and the outcome is a family conflict wrought to tragic pitch.

In the last movements of the film following Neil's death, what Weir (and Schulman) have done is to give individuals at hand in the most gratifying way Weir has always seemed drawn by the possibilities of melodrama (particularly in *The Year of Living Dangerously*) but he has never succumbed to whole-heartedness to its lure as he does here. As Academy and parents close ranks looking for a scapegoat, they write on Keating and his dangerous liberating values and the film moves towards a powerfully moving climax.

This climax, which rears the more obvious heroicizing possibilities for Keating, makes manifestly clear the positive influence (accusatory) protestant has had on the boys. As they himself here, the tragic composition ensures their flourishing of the importantly bulging principal. It is one of the great melodramatic endings of recent years: not only does it pro-

vide a heightened and simplified upsurge of emotion when it is needed, but it means that we engage with its moral judgments. There is nothing equivocal here. Guilt and innocence have separated themselves out for our scrutiny and our endorsement of the film's recognition of their difference. Keating may be leaving Welton but through him some of the boys have won an important battle and the film concludes on their announcement of victory. Looking back over the film from this vantage point, one can forgive sentences to dawdle and to over simplify. The end, finally, justifies the means and one feels that nothing has been wasted, that everything leads into that unimpeachably confident final movement.

It's not necessary to be a card-carrying member to be interested in the continuities and developments of Weir's career as a dramatist. By any criteria, he is one of the most gifted filmmakers thrown up by the new Australian cinema. He has always had a strong visual sense, he has always been responsive to myth, to atmosphere, and in *Dead Poets Society* he has strengthened his narrative grasp by creating the language to melodrama. He has successfully sought to move and exhilarate the audience and — for at least one of its members — has achieved his purpose.

SCREENING HISTORY Directed by Peter Weir. Produced by Steven Soder, Paul Jaeger Weir, Terry Thomas. Associate producer: Duncan Henderson. Screenplay: Tom Schulman. Director of photography: John Seale. Editor: William Anderson. Production designer: Wendy Rott. Music: Maximal Jam. Production design: Wendy Rott. Cast: Robin Williams (John Keating), Robert Sean Leonard (Neil Perry), Ethan Hawke (Todd Anderson), Josh Charles (Knox Overton), Gail Heston (Charles Dalton), Dylan McDermott (Richard Gribble), Allison Janney (Gloria Weir), James Whitmore (Harvard Penn), Norman Lloyd (Mr. Niles), Karl Wood Smith (Mr. Perry), Chris Behar (Mr. Perry). Touchstone Pictures in association with Silver Screen Pictures IV, in association with Miramax Pictures. Distribution: Touchstone. Running time: 128 mins. USA, 1989.

RONZA, LOVER BOY

LYN MCDONALD

TWO NEW Australian films, David Seman's *Bonza*, and Geoffrey Wright's *Lover Boy*, are vivid examples of the essential difference between film and current TV drama.

Both films show simple Australians, but universal, themes of family, relationships and the agony of it all. With a lot of subtle uncertainty, they are perceptive about absolutely normal and accepted social frameworks and behavioural rituals.

Bonza is a bizarre vision of family life seen through the eyes of a dog. In sharp humour, viciously parodies the traditional unit with mother as housewife (we see the waitress with the family dog after taking him on a dinner date), and dad as Ben dictator (ordering his son to be a drinker). The son sings rock operas (so Bonza the dog covered in stitches) and the sister tries to get her head together after returning from overseas (where she went to get her head together).

The spiteful death of Bonza drives the family together in two then apart around the grave, the narrative obviously allowing Bonza to rise from the dead. The script reads like a joke and this director has more control over his material as he explodes myths about human nature in a way that the whinging content of TV series or mainstream clips never achieve.

Lover Boy is like a delicate chocolate with a soft centre. The peering conceit might have occurred anywhere, but North Albion, Australia, isn't bad. This is an (ultimately) impregnable love relationship between a young boy and an older woman. The heart between Mick (Noah Taylor) and Sully (Gillian Jones) is in action from the beginning and never lets up. It's the painful impossibility of such a perfectly understandable and perfectly real, and honest which makes fine drama.

Falling turning such an idea into a blue book or an episode of *Nighthouse*, the film requires deft directorial angles and skilled acting. The supporting cast never fails the leads here. The script puts the sex scenes first and the consequences build the past thereafter. It is a charming recipe of subplots that never spoil the *Bonza*. Director Geoffrey Wright wisely explores scenes with dramatic angles and lighting that, along with the art direction, always create a sense of time, place and mood, as well as narrative posturing.

In *Lover Boy*, as in *Bonza*, the concepts being explored are slight but the execution (of both) change them with significance. Take something simple like a domestic scene in suburbia, a representative social situation, and blend it for meaning. *Lover Boy* never makes itself dry. *Bonza* strikes successfully like an angry snake.

Where *Bonza* is sort of retro nostalgia with a bit of 1980s (or is it a '70s) nostalgia and a good, sharp dose of '80s hot sex with three-eyed teeth, *Lover Boy* is poignantly realistic in its seductive direction of characters' feelings and the inevitability of their union.

The inside/husband figure in *Lover Boy* and

Bonza are very body. It is no accident that these men are thick set, hairy, dark and thick of thought. The women are allowed some lyrical input. These films are about the new way, no longer are children seen and only postconsciously heard. In *Bonza*, the son (played flamboyantly by Peter Rowden) and his sister (Suzie Dex) are the source of destruction of the great family lie. In *Lover Boy* it is 59 minutes of cinema as a stronger brews the same of adult love and sex with a woman three times his age.

Both films explain the use of flag(s) and camera direction for atmosphere that speaks. In *Bonza*, our dog's-eye-view of the situation makes sure we resist via the *Bonza*. In *Lover Boy*, we are invited to see what is going to happen before it does. Gillian Jones' loving Madonna whose Sully is always precariously desired and we wait for Mick's reaction, as the does. In this film the love/sex scenes are indeed like as are the fight scenes at the end. Like the son's vile nightmare sequence in *Bonza*, there is a sense that the psychological is out of control, as when Mick approaches a night service station to hear his lover's ex-husband. Mick's death scene is then drawn out with steps of run, almost sharp edges and half frames, and we don't have time to know

what will probably happen. Sully waken and goes out to find her young lover, but misses his dying form in the dark and remains inside, allowing us to experience the simplest possible suspense which purely serves to rectify the tragedy of the day, fragile relationship. When Bonza dies after swallowing some of man's gulls (which her traumatised son has stolen for his own use), we've missed everything is still too intense to be crying), but, most important, from Bonza's eye view from the coffin, and then from above, we are drawn to *Bonza* what we have learnt about the family until now.

Both *Bonza* and *Lover Boy* are tributes to what drama really is - the exploration of conflict. Neither fall into the trap of thoughtless resolution. *Bonza* can traditional narrative as a source of humour and powerful atmosphere. *Lover Boy* finds an extraordinary almost resting in gentle, spare, unadorned human exchanges. And both films have used a camera like a weapon or an angle most had instead of like a TV or home video flapper, probing instead of peering.

Had these films interchanged their original material for each other's, it is striking to think how they may have changed their original styles. More please.



BONZA LOVER BOY (FROM LEFT) TAYLOR AND JONES (FROM LEFT) JONES AND TAYLOR. **LOVER BOY** (FROM LEFT) TAYLOR AND JONES. **BONZA** (FROM LEFT) TAYLOR AND JONES. **LOVER BOY** (FROM LEFT) TAYLOR AND JONES. **BONZA** (FROM LEFT) TAYLOR AND JONES.

BONZA Directed by David Seman. Producer: Deborah Hooton. Screenplay: David Seman. Director of photography: Leigh Fisher. Editor: Ben Bellows. Production designer: Len Barnes. Sound recorder: Philip Cleary. Music: Al Mallen, Paul McWhann. Cast: Peter Green (Toby), Marlene Edwards (Suzie), Suzie Dex (Kathleen), Peter Rowden (Terry). Production company: Bonza Productions. Release date: AFI 34 mm 37 mm Australia 1988.

LOVER BOY Directed by Geoffrey Wright. Producer: David Schiff. Screenplay: Geoffrey Wright. Director of photography: Michael Williams. Editor: Grant Brown. Production designer: Judy Garland. Sound: Mark Tappin. Music: Job Clifford White. Cast: Noah Taylor (Mick), Gillian Jones (Sully), Ben Mendelsohn (Gino), Daniel Pollock (Duck), Alec Carter (Rhonda), Peter Hosking (Lex), Beverly Gardiner (Mick's mother). Production company: Scott Film Distributors. AFI 34 mm 37 mm Australia 1989.



WTHM

THE 12 TRAIL CLUB is front of me in the Balmesque as I discuss the difference between the Caped Crusader and Superman. "Batman's real," she declares without hesitation. "He's got no special powers, he just uses regular stuff to wage The Fight."

Batman's toys are hardly "regalarduff," but they are, after all, just cars, aircraft, mass gadgets and such wares. Superman has the supernatural powers, but keeps trying to make out he's just a regular guy. Batman, on the other hand, is basically a regular guy trying to make out that he's a superhero.

The view of Barman has drawn criticism. The complaints from Barman's folks about the casting of the film have appeared everywhere from *USA Today* to *The Wall Street Journal*. Most believe Kozlov continues the very idea of Barman. Film critics have picked on The Joker's trashing of Goddard City's Art Gallery as "irresponsible filmmaking" [dot] — may lead to apparent behavior". Some residents and gays have joined forces in denying the slowness of Roden — the mothers fleeing kids would have nobody to identify with, and the gays because the film has been stripped of homosexual content.

have claimed a "100% awareness factor" for the film—theoretically every man, woman, child (and pet) in the U.S. was aware of the film's debut. After the first 14 days and a gross of \$225 million, there seems little reason to doubt this claim.

Cochran City is portrayed as a vast, expansive urban jungle, its darkness broken only by points of light, smoke and mist. Anton Fure's design is influenced as much by F.W. Murnau as it is by Fong Long, the legacy of these German Expressionists evident in the understated, meticulously detailed production.

Even Bauman's love interest, Vicki Vale (Kim Basinger), is made out to be a scolding, head-to-head with being fought in the streets and aspects of Gotham by two men apiece to the utmost of thousands of cops.

As usual, Nicholson seems to have all the best lines. And he sets a new standard in 'one of the top' performance types—singing, dancing, strutting and posing, his crooned ditties apparently fed by the Prince songs on his ghetto-blaster.

An narrative fantasy, *Salween* has more than its share of flaws to detract from its robust achievements: scenes where the action lacks credibility, or the character motivations are strikingly illogical, or the faults in the comic timing successfully diminish the more

Sam Hargrave and Warren Susman's script is similarly uneven. The promises of psychological exposition of the characters are over whelmed by the state-of-art set design and the movie's basic silliness.

As homage it runs way too high, and is unlikely to exceed the standards set by similar films like George Papan's *Jester*. But it takes risks and gambles, and that's more than one can say for *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade*, *Gladiator*, *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*, shows a more daring and confident approach with his action scenes on various of the *Caped Crusader*, and for most of *Indiana* his gamble pays off.

STYMAN Directed by Tim Burton. Producers Jon Peters, Peter Leach. Executive producers Benjamin Melnikoff, Michael Uchin. Co-producer Chris Koenig. Screenplay Kate Haman, Warren Susman. From a story by Haman, based on characters created by Bob Eckstein. Director of photography: Reggie Fendler. Editor: Ray Lovejoy. Production designer: Anton Furst. Supervising art director: Les Tordella. Music: Danny Elfman. Costume designer: Patricia Norris. Sound editor: Don Sharpe. Cast: Michael Keaton [Batman], Jack Nicholson [Jack Napier/The Joker], Kim Basinger [Vicki Vale], Robert Wahl [Alfred the Butler], Tim Ringer [Commissioner Gordon], Billy Dee Williams [Harvey Dent], Michael Gough [Mr. Freeze], Jack Palance [Ginsman], Jerry Hall [Ada], Lee Wallace [Mayor], Tracy Walter [Jabot], Production company: Golden Films. Distribution: Rialto. Running time: 126 mins. USA: 1989.

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

ANTHONY WHO HAS ADMIRERED the work of writer and director Ben Lewis will, undoubtedly, be keen to see his first locally made theatrical feature, *Georgia*, which Lewis directed and co-scripted (with Joanna Murray-Smith and Rob Muhl).

in *Parade*, a comedy drama for British TV, winner of a Silver Broomstick for best television film at the 1979 Melbourne Film Festival.)

A notable trademark of Lewis's work is his ability to create colorful, quirky, unconventional characters, and to place narrative emphasis on their service. With little more than a handful of lines, these glamorous characters and the vivid backdrop of St. Kilda, *A Matter Of Course* thrives on motion instead as a sizzling, and fairly unusual, modern romance. Even in *The Dancers*, based on an extraordinary event of World War II when a shipment of European Jewish artists and artists who were members in Germany, the broad historical canvas did not overshadow the characters. With its cool and detached perspective, a sustained childhood notion of nationalism, in the process of making the social and legal movements the fledgling colony had under and in this way, the highly-principled but bureaucratically connected judge Michael Rafferty, the principal character of Rafferty's *Justice*, gives further sent to these notions, the first few scenes of the show, it should be said, a finely tuned ensemble piece.

These observations, however, are merely to illustrate the unexpected departure Lewis has made with Georgia. A mystery-core thriller, Georgia seems to be not only a strange match of talent to a project, but in every marriage of disparate genres and influences, from *Randomness* and *Blue Up* to any number of Hitchcock dramas.

Nina Rafferty (Judy Davis) is on the threshold of a challenging career as an investigating lawyer, when she marries to a new apartment — a fancy, New York-style loft overlooking Port Phillip Bay. On her first night there, she discovers a photograph of a woman holding the camera a small baby. Later that night, an

invitation to a retrospective exhibition of photography by Georgia White is slipped under her door.

Nina attends the exhibition, where she is intrigued by the photos on show: a master section slumped in a blood-splattered bed, a policeman, her identified as Le Mari (Marshall Napier), inspecting the scene, the infamous study property developer and businessman Karlo (John Bach) trying to shield himself from the photographer, a brooding self-portrait of the photographer.

Nina is confounded, however, when she recognizes her "mother" (Elizabeth (Julie Blake) and Elizabeth's lover Ludo (Alan Wright) in these photos. After confronting Elizabeth, Nina is certain Georgia White was Nina's mother. Some say Georgia committed suicide; others say she was pushed into the water and drowned.

Nina sets forth to investigate her mother's death. Starting with Elizabeth, then Ludo, she tracks down Le Mari, who has since been taken off the police force, and finally meets Karlo. Their stories unfold through flashback sequences, creating a conflicting and contradictory picture of the up-and-down-up-upside the final moment of Georgia's death.

Typically moving between the cocktail party, where seemingly delicate couples tangled while Georgia drowned, and Nina's present investigations, the film serves to draw in every parallel as it possibly can between Georgia and Nina. Aside from having the same actress play both parts, visual links are made between the view from Nina's apartment and that from the house where Georgia died. But the parallel soon becomes strained and, in any case, something of a lost opportunity. Nina's career, boldly investigating the fraud, is dropped early in the film, making redundant and irrelevant familiarity between Nina and Georgia as women who knew too much.

The relationships of the characters in this ambiguous past, one quickly learns, were founded upon duplicity, deceit, betrayal, and their corresponding moment line, sugar, longing. Twenty years or so later, each sheds on the latter moment of Georgia's name, guardedly and easily making their confessions to Nina.

The characters remain shrouded in secrecy, suffocating in the burdens of the past, and little is revealed. Red herring clues might not Karlo, who it is suggested was having an affair with Georgia, be Nina's father? And the fact that Georgia met Elizabeth when she snipped a casual shot of Elizabeth kissing her lover Ludo on the beach (all the while being married to Karlo) have anything to do with taking her life? Death is suggested in Georgia, but teasingly left unanswered.

By implication the viewer finds out how Georgia died, but the characters themselves remain sketchy, essentially one-dimensional. The mixed characters are occasionally very toward caricature. The pivotal scene where Nina confronts Elizabeth about her mother's confession and overly mannered, particularly when Nina's dialogue runs along the lines of, "Am I supposed to have an error to read error

right now? I want to do the right thing." Neither are the characters particularly engaging, making it difficult to really care about their suffering, or the outcome.

A major sub-plot involves a mother, presumably the person who planted the photograph and invitation at Nina's apartment, but possibly also someone associated with the car found near Nina's investigation (though this implication is made redundant when the mother demands negatives of Georgia's photographs). The mother is glimpsed early in the film, going up to Nina's flat, and, later, behind the wheel of a car in the parking lot where Nina has parked. In one unfortunate scene, however, Ludo is attacked while he takes a shower (suspense, surprise) by the mystery mother brandishing a knife and demanding the negatives. The next day, Ludo tells Nina, who notices the bruise on his face, that he has to go away for a few days. He is dispersed from the film.

The absence to Hitchcock was apt, though very forgettable, but Hitchcock would have let go quite so easily.

CASTING Directed by Ron Lewin. Producer: Bob Wren. Screenplay: Rod Lewis, Joanna Murnighan, Bob Wren. Based on an original story by Mike Gandy. Cost. Director of photography: Tim Salt. Second director: John Phillips. Editor: Edward McQueen. Music: Production designer: Jon Dawkins. Music: Paul Greenaway. Cast: Judy Davis (Nina), Georgia, Julie Blake (Elizabeth), John Bach (Karlo), Marshall Napier (Le Mari), Alan Wright (Ludo), Leon Fendler (Michael), Ray Roberts (Librarian), Robert Williams (Alice). Production company: Jesters Films. Distribution: Jesters, 14 mm, 94.5 mins. Australia, 1989.

NEW YORK STORIES

RAFFAELI CAPUTO

MARKIN SCORSESE's "Lulu Lovers," the first in the trilogy of mini features that make up *New York Stories*, employs its title effect: which, because it so consciously highlights the act of looking, undermines the explosive, teasing style that pervades much of Scorsese's cinema. Like the lipist of *Local Habits* (Nick Nolte), who finishes certain parts of the body of his woman: music, Puccio (Rosanna Arquette), in particular her smile, Scorsese as a filmmaker of the objects, gestures and overall surfaces of the visual field his camera is trained on.

The iris device can be employed in two ways, either by opening out from a detail, or by closing in on one. In "Lulu Lovers" it's put to use in both ways, but at two particular moments in the film (not surprisingly, they are the opening and closing stages of the film), yet with a different function each time.

As the film opens there is a whole series of scenes which successively open out from a number of objects: a half emptied bottle of beer, a set of paint-covered brushes, a concrete pylon that Local often scoops up in a fantasy of activity, a tube of paint that Local then accidentally wags on with a face that has no blurry substance about it rather than cream. The device functions to under these scenes elements from the rest of the frame,





TOP: ALLEN (BACK VIEW); THE FEMME FATALE AND HER ASSISTANT; ALLA (CAROLLY O'BRIEN); ALLEN, MARTIN SCORSESE & LIFE LESSONS; PAUL DI NOVO (JOHN STONE); ALLEN, A WOMAN SITTING IN THE CHAIR BY MICHAEL WILSON (WOODY ALLEN) AND HER (JANE FARRAR) IN ALLEN'S 1969 FILM 'ANALOGY' (NEW YORK STORES)

draws attention to the art, makes them central, and thereby asks what is the invisible link between them. Not content with, but quite wary, their formal link: a pattern of fragmenting, and opening out which creates an emotional or psychological environment that no dialogue could provide. This pattern permeates the quiet and character with a sense of irony, observed, bottled up energy that's about to open out.

It's as late with the sternest expressionism of Lancelotti's art, and in particular the camera he is working on at the film's start. Left and art get increasingly unrecognised at this point - the progression of the painting parallel the turbulent, obsessive, fragmenting (they don't sleep together) relationship Lancel has with Pauline. The final art effect at the film's close affirms this, because it works as a way of summing up, the one remaining art rather than opening out. As his exhibition opening, the blackness touches toward a spot at the far end of the gallery, and isolates Lancel with another Pauline, a young, hopeful one whom he

offers to take on as an assistant while at the same time fragmenting select parts of her body (it's not an irony that they're standing beneath the painting he was completing in the final weeks of his relationship with Pauline). Yet, there appears to be some sense to all this with the suggestion that the whole process is going to repeat itself. And, without being overly emphatic, it's a sexual frustration which is at the heart of Lancel's creative urges, the return of his violent neuroses and obsessions.)

Perhaps that is expressed with greater intensity in an earlier scene, a scene which has a formal shot of Lancel, then changed and spotted with paint, going comically out and over the camera, apparently at the canvas he has been working on throughout the night. But then a cut to a medium long shot reveals Lancel standing in the centre of the studio, his back to the camera, the canvas to the right of frame, and his body turned to the left staring up at the small ink-woman - a left where Pauline roared, and where she has just engaged in love play with a talented young painter. He stares up at the small ink-woman in the same way that he has been staring at his canvas. This is what was meant by Scorsese's ability to act-in-one as a dancer.

It would seem futile to say that Scorsese's staring over the nature of creativity has as

much to do with eliminating as it has with painting, but it seems that Scorsese's manner of developing film-making with painting leads to point beyond "Life Lessons". Think of the way La Morte pounds the life out of the "poetry boy" in *Agony Ball*, and then the image shifts to a close-up, point-of-view shot of his wife in the audience. Maybe the way Scorsese cuts and connects different shots - the ring, and the audience, for instance - makes her something of a painter: the isolation of these contrasting spaces is to a degree pastoral.

In comparison, the other two segments of *New York Stories* pale, especially Coppola's "Life Without Zoo" is a fluffy, lily-white adventure that's a modern version of de Mille's "The Sign of the Cross". Coppola has of late taken Hollywood-like shortcuts but they have never been so lightweight, and don't seem to conflict with Coppola's largely theoretical cinematic style. There's always the sense of things being staged in Coppola's films, and it certainly does not seem to suit the condensed form.

Finally, in all fairness, Woody Allen's "Oedipus Wrecks" is charged with a nerve, this cruel, maddening sensibility. But this is to do with character rather than composition of spatial elements, as it is in "Life Lessons". The tale says it all. It gives Woody direct access to Jerry Lewis, if anyone had doubts, though it's without the "vulgarity" - there's no room here for about to blast out "MAY". No, the humming, reaching voice in the little comedy belongs to me herself. "Oedipus Wrecks" certainly appears as a continuation of Allen's comedy, but one couldn't say it's a high point. It's a genuine and modest return to the genre of nervous and self-pity, and self-pity spells self-parody. And that is good sign.

NEW YORK STORES Producers: Robert Greenhut
LIFE LESSONS Directed by Martin Scorsese. Two stars: Barbara De Foa. Screenplay: Richard Price. Director of photography: Nicolas Marescaux. Edit: Joe Thelen. Soundtrack: Production designer: Kevin Tan. Sound: James Sabin. Cast: Nick Nolte (Lancel Debra), Barbara Argento (Pauline), Patrick O'Neal (Philip Finkel), Jesse Bermejo (Arden Tere), Steve Buscemi (Gregory Smith), Peter Guber (Hans R), Diana Douglas (Pauline's friend). **LIFE WITHOUT ZOO** Directed by Francis Coppola. Producers: Paul Ross, Fred Fuchs. Screenplay: Francis Coppola, Sofia Coppola. Director of photography: Vittorio Storaro. Editor: Barry Malkin. Production designer: Dana Touloukian. Sound: James Sabin. Music: Carmine Coppola. Kid Credit and the Coconuts. Cast: Michael McDonald (Zoo), Tala Bica (Charlene), Camille Grameri (Claudia), Paul Herman (Clifford), James House (Henry), Tom Morgan (Hector), Eddie Tall (Alvin), Carmine Coppola (Kirsti musician), Carole Rose (art) (Frances Berrey). **WOODY ALLEN'S** Directed by Woody Allen. Producers: Robert Greenhut. Executive producers: Jack Rollins, Charles H. Jaffe. Screenplay: Woody Allen. Director of photography: Ben Mephor. Editor: Susan H. Muen. Production designer: Susan Loquasto. Sound: James Sabin. Cast: Woody Allen (Abraham Miller), Mia Farrow (Lisa), John Kiser (Thelma), Mia Quanzel (Mother), Martin Gasterman (Psychiatrist), Jesse Reaves (Ann Gold), George Schaeffer (Sheldon), Bridget Arns (Lisa), Edward J. Koch (Hansel). A Touchstone presentation of a Jack Rollins and Charles H. Jaffe production. Distributor: Roadshow. 85 mins 123 mins USA 1989.

**THIS ISSUE: ACTING IN THE CINEMA, BY JAMES NAREMORE;
AND MASTERS OF STARLIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHERS IN HOLLYWOOD,
BY DAVID FAHEY AND LINDA RICH**



ACTING IN THE CINEMA

James Naremore, *University of California Press, Berkeley 2002, hb, rev \$47.00*

JOHN CONRADO

"There are men on my walls,
and I'll walk through it."

— ROBERT BATHURST

THE QUESTION OF film performance has up to recent times—say, till the end of the Seventies—been marginalised in film theory and criticism. Since then a small analytical literature has been gradually built up around this complex, fascinating problem area. What's clear from this literature is that when we're theorising in a meaningful general way about performance, we are confronted by many

conceptual difficulties. To begin with, when we talk about film acting, does it differ in any significant way across genres? If there are important critical differences to be noted, why is this so? If all we can say in this early stage of analysing screen performance is that it needs the same kind of detailed explanation that questions of film narrative structure have received over the past 20 years. This is absolutely essential before we can make sensible, informed statements about its nature.

Performance is a central part of our apprehension of the many different genre films that constitute American narrative cinema: the western, film noir, melodrama and comedy. When we study genre films, we should consider more than just questions of visual style, thematic oppositions, and narrative structure

We need to explore the reasons why performance is an underdeveloped topic in genre studies. Recent genre-consciousness has been discussing (often in a fleeting manner) the broad generic conventions of performance by looking at the creation of the actor as subject within a film. As Richard De Cordova suggests, it is necessary to concentrate on generating a general and controlling of performance aspects of an role within the economy of genre cinema.¹ To come to terms with the complex dynamic nature of film performance in the light of its rich, diverse institutions of radio, vaudeville, theatre, television, popular music and the cinema itself, we have to adopt a more productive comparative approach to the issue of performance and genre. If we are to shift performance from its current status as a "crutch all category", as De Cordova states, to a more desirable status as "an object of theory", then we are obliged to ask more systematic questions about how performance functions across genre.²

Someone who has been asking fruitful, open-ended questions about the cultural, historical and theoretical dimensions of film performance has been James Naremore in his immensely readable and suggestive new work titled *Acting in the Cinema*³ (1998). It is a richly detailed analysis probing the expressive resources, emotional resources and socio-cultural determinants of film acting. His criticism is informed by a phenomenological approach which uses the basic concepts of classical and contemporary film theory, as well as the writings of influential non-film theorists like Stanislovsky, Brecht and the 'Chicago School' of social anthropology. In particular, he shows how different approaches to acting have certain ideological implications about art, culture and society. In addition, Naremore is able to demonstrate how screen performance is linked to the presentation of self in society. To do this he skilfully uses Erving Goffman's sociological ideas about personality, self and character being constructed by everyday role-playing. Naremore is refreshingly candid about the conceptual problems facing anyone who wishes to talk about performance in the age of mechanical reproduction. He acknowledges from the outset that movie actors exist as agents of narrative and that cinema be discussed as if they were operating in a vacuum independent of the many performative institutions and crafts that surround and shape them.

tion as involving behavior. As it simplifies, this concept of human behavior signifies the transportation of everyday existence into a theatrical realm. Whatever the form of human exchange, it essentially concerns the notion of a performer's communicating with an audience. Therefore, so it must be emphasized, we have a form of film and theatre acting which is an art dedicated to "the systematic conscious depiction of character, or to what seventeenth century England described as 'personation'" ¹ In the wake of cinema film directors like John Ellis, Narbonne sees filmed performance as being articulated by the so-called "placé effect", which is a delicate tension between preservation and loss, presence and absence.

The author's treatment of film acting incorporates the by-now-familiar topic articulation which lists the three most important determining factors in shaping stardom as: (a) the "total" person of the actor, (b) the persona which is constructed about stars through publicity and their association with certain types created by the system of genres, and (c) their particular parts within individual films. In other words, the actor as an amalgam of actor, part and persona is mediated through genre. Narbonne examines seven legendary stars and all point to the same phenomenon of cultural and sexual dynamics: their names circulate through publicity, everyday language and biography, each one of them represents an idealist, that is to say, a set of performing attributes that is systematically understood as movies and sometimes copied by impressionists like Robert Papillon (Robert De Niro) in *The King of Comedy*. If we see a film in cinema or on the screen, film, celebrity and myth, then we need to ask ourselves the following questions: Where does the actor end and the character begin? How much does performance "create" the character? And, how much performance as a design created by our interaction with actors and celebrity? Some of us may even believe that actors do what we construct the movies in which they appear. To cite Joe Collins (William Holden) in *Seven Wonders* (1958): "People don't know that somebody actually writes the picture. They think actors make it up as they go along" ² But even if they do make some contribution to the construction of characters in a movie, asks Narbonne, how do we recognize their work if it is grounded in their own bodies? To echo the author's reference to Taine, how do we separate the dancer from the dance?

Finally, I wish to examine briefly how the author skillfully unearths Carr Grant's performance of self-effacement underachievement in *North by Northwest* (1959). Narbonne treats the movie as a complex text of delicately orchestrated performative dynamics highlighting Grant's star persona in one of Hollywood's most glamorous and sophisticated lavens since the early Thirties, when he appeared in several New Wave movies. What we encounter in this particularly second reading of Grant's performance, in terms of his particular good looks, brilliant light comedy acting skills and highly recognizable iconic

image, is the central concept of the star as spectacle. In the overall economy of the movie, we are shown how Grant's star image is based on his tremendous talent for verbal and physical agility. Grant was cinema's enduring personification of elegance, wit, and sophisticated man. What we notice in Narbonne's account of Grant's preciously timed minimalist acting style is the author's spectacular delight in experiencing the playful self-referential dialectic between Grant's supple body, dagger clothes and his celebrated persona of a Hollywood romance ideal who aged gracefully and was always known for his relaxed assured screen performance. What motivates this particularly fine reexamination of Grant's deconstructive performance in *North by Northwest* is Narbonne's sharp feel for Grant's Katharine Hepburn-like of acting. Grant is more concerned with readiness than with feeling. Everything for the actor depended on athletic skill, timing and the inherent capability of maintaining cool, collected reactions. Hitchcock understood this clearly. Grant's performance is structured on the actor's unsurpassed ability to comprehend classical film rhetoric. Narbonne is especially good on demonstrating how Grant's performative skills rely on his ability to move, walk, climb, and execute everyday actions in a graceful manner. Above all, the movie's visual dynamic, cultural codes and rhythms have been

shaped by Grant's performance of clearly defined and perfectly executed complicated small actions. It is a performance typical of Grant, in that it celebrated a contagious zest for life. You just know that Grant had fun in making *North by Northwest*. It is as clear as the three lines chalked in the side of Mount Rushmore: The last words shall go to David Thomson: "It is only natural that his very best works – his most complex, amusing, but unscrupling pictures – are both studies in Holly-wood lies, and in the particular delight there is (or was) in making films" ³

NOTES

- 1 Richard De Cordova, "Genre and Performance: An Overview", in Barry Keith Grant (ed.), *Film Genre Reader*, Austin, The University of Texas Press, 1988, pp. 128-139.
- 2 *ibid.*, p. 129.
- 3 Janet Narbonne, *Among the Canons: The career of Catherine Hepburn*, Berkeley, 1988, pp. 547-55.
- 4 Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema*, Bloomington, Indiana University, 1981, p. 163.
- 5 Narbonne, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 2.
- 7 Alfred Hitchcock: "Dance", (1957) quoted in Narbonne, p. 24.
- 8 Narbonne, *ibid.*, p. 23.
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 147.
- 10 David Thomson, "Charles and the Star", *Film Comment*, Feb. 1989, p. 64.





ILLUSTRATION: PETER BARNES'S IMAGE BY MICHELLE BARRETT FOR THE SET OF THE PRODUCTION BY DAVID D. SUTTOR (1998)

photographic image, still or moving – the subject that so obsessed Josef von Sternberg – merges closely with Hollywood's transcendental mythology of the 'star' in his or her who attracts light (and adoration), who thence and thencemore the darkness. Such a poetic vision – displayed as well in the volume by Arthur P. Kuhn's portrait of Thomas Mungtan, or the great Robert Rader's photo of Tabulah Barkham – governed not only Hollywood still photography of the 1920s and '30s, but also the more cinematic and technocratic model of cinema during the same period. Borzage, Scorsese, Hathaway's *Peter Manne*.

The book is rather wary of claiming the film still genre as 'art' in quite the same fashion. This is perhaps because what is known in the industry as 'production stills' – various settings up or distributions of scenes from a film in production – are more readily perceived in nature, and more fluidly permeate on moving pictures, than glamorous portraits. They are often also, as is their name, a lot cruder and more vulgarly spectacular – more like popular movie culture – than glamorous those. A whole generation of today's 'post modern' artists, from Cindy Sherman in America to Robyn

Barnes locally, has discovered, and taken off from, the various formal intrigues and compositional stylistic strategies inherent in literally thousands of these film stills. Fisker and Rader scratch on this whole area in their selection of wonderful images relating to Rita Hayworth and Glenn Ford in *Calda*, *Brooklyn*, *Cried* in *Dear* *Three Dark Rivers* and Robert Montgomery *The End of the Charge*. Yet even here they clearly favour photographic artists (Robert Coburn is the first two instances, Lucio Willeger in the third) who abstract and purify their material – who make it less like Hollywood and more like art.

Photographers – of the sort portrayed and virtually made marked by *Light magazine* in its heyday – also are a little usually within the terms of this collection. This genre adhered into the domain of Hollywood photography a whole new pictorial manner – creatively 'messy' at times, wildly irregular and disordered, full of strange compositional notions, hinging on a certain note of disconnection and alienation. Many of the fine 'reportage' photographs in this book – such as those by Phil Stern and John Seeger – capture these qualities strikingly. Fisker and Rader read to the masses such images in the predictable ways – as revealing the 'truth' of actors in their unguarded moments away from the camera, or of the filmmaking process itself, 'behind the scenes' (old-fashioned). Perhaps are hoping to forge a consensus 'tradition' from glamour photography to photoperformers, the book tends to favour the postmodern of the period – with certainly an overdone account of shots of Marilyn Monroe, by many different hands (Some psychologists called the hand).

Yet photographers, it seems to me, look away from both the Hollywood names of cinema, and the structures of 'Hollywood photography' as suggested by this book. The 'subject matter' of these images is no longer Hollywood (no stars or its world) because, in

their images, they quickly deconstruct the whole idea of a 'subject' at their centre of focus. Many of these images, going so far as they do into the heart of the reality at the tangled phenomenal surface of events, are completely deconstructed, not only personally but 'spiritually', in their mood and tone. They have the viewer aroused, from one border of the frame to the next, just when it is that you are most set to be among them!

Of course, in exploring such artists, *Light*-style photoperformers refigured new, post-classical forms of cinema, which work through the three orders, fully exploded moments of the 'road movie', and the personal moments of cold structure, the film of, among others, Martin Hellman, Jean-Pierre Gaudy, Jan Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Robert Frank, who moved from still photography to cinema (not recently *Candy Mountain* with Tom Waits and Sade Ogan, as yet unseen here), and Dennis Hopper (see his photographic collection *Out of the Series*). And photoperformers' arrival announced the historical moment at which 'starlight' could no longer be the centrifugal, seductive force holding together as art, a culture, or an industrial dream factory like Hollywood. Perhaps the 'golden years' preceding that break-up were only then lived, almost illusory, anyway. Our nostalgia for that time is rendered rich indeed by a book as sumptuous as *Masters of Starlight*. ■

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE ACTOR AND HIS TIME

John Gielgud, in collaboration with John Miller and John Powell
Edinburgh: Corgi, London, 1998, pb, pp. 224 pp.
 A revised and updated edition of Gielgud's 1979 autobiography which coincides with his 88th birthday.

CULT MOVIES THREE

Danny Fain
Edinburgh: Corgi, London, 1998, pb, pp. 224 pp.
 A sequel to Dainy's two earlier books. There are 50 new titles, ranging from such respectable classics as *Dr. Strangelove* and *Psycho* to the X-rated *Capt. Jack*.

MARILYN MON AMOUR

THE PRIVATE ALBUM OF ARNOLD NEUF ELBERG
 Andre de Dreu
Edinburgh: Corgi, London, 1998, pb, pp. 224 pp.
 A chronological collection of nearly unseen stills (all black and white) of Marilyn, by the LA-based Hungarian photographer. An unusually comprehensive view of one person's emotional and physical changes over 17 years.

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documentary, appropriate to the military or non-military in which they will be applied.

MAJOR PROJECTS (pending title)

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Director Michael E. Grant
Photography John Hocking
Sound recordist Max Hume
Editor Michael Hume
Exec. producer Brian White
Dramatist Graham Mall

Prod. coordinator Gilchrist Carpenter
Prod. manager John Russell
Prod. secretary Kathy Grant
Prod. accountant Simon Lamborn

Art. photography Carmo Ky
Publicity Jane Glen
Marketing Martin Wood

Lab. service Helen Film Company
Length 80 mins
Gang 1 item

Synopsis: A documentary for television illustrating the Movement Theatre of Australia's contemporary puppetry. Excludes, from five drafts to opening night. Inspired by Bill Weller's book, *Catharsis*, the puppet play written by Birmingham playwright Vivian Walker, brings Bill Weller's message to the stage in a lively production aimed at a wide family audience.

LOWBUDGET

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Screenplay Ian Walker
Fence on video by Minister's Opinions

Director - Department of Transport - in Camera consultation

Exec. producer Brian White
Prod. manager John Russell
Prod. secretary Kathy Grant
Prod. accountant Simon Lamborn
Publicity Jane Glen
Marketing Martin Wood
Length 20 minutes

Logline:
Synopsis: Documentary on the Lightbox film system, an technology and history.

MOVIES ON THE CARD

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Director Richard Taylor
Screenplay Brian Johnston
Prod. designer Louella Harfield
Exec. producer Jane E. H.

Prod. manager Carmo Maximilian
Prod. secretary Jane Francis
Prod. accountant Waldemar Wherryman

Exec. producer Margo Paulsen
Director's assistant John Phillips
Lighting camera Jonathan Maynard
Make up Michelle Myers
Wardrobe John Phillips
Publicity Jane Glen

Marketing John Brinkley
Catering The Catering Company
Location Film Australia
On location Hoyts Entertainment

Length 18 minutes
Gang 1 video

Cast: Carol Wilton (exec manager), Siriven Tandy (screenwriter), Vicki Lahti (tech coordinator), Russell Cowie (story man/producer)

Synopsis: A film for EXHIBITION which is a historical look at how the film unit at the Lightbox will work in a computer system in addition to what is now in progress for the Lightbox.

MILITARY FORCE

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Paul Henderson
Screenplay Richard Ryan
Exec. producer Jane Hume
Prod. manager Jon Hume
Prod. secretary Lou Harfield

Prod. company: Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company: Film Australia Pty Ltd
Director: Bill Bennett
Screenplay: David Bennett
Photography: David Bennett
Sound recordist: Max Hume
Editor: Max Hume
Exec. producer: Jane Hume
Prod. manager: Jane Hume
Prod. secretary: Jane Hume
Prod. accountant: Jane Hume
Art. photography: Jane Hume
Publicity: Jane Hume
Marketing: Jane Hume
Lab. service: Jane Hume
Length: 10 minutes
Gang: 1 item

MOREOVER

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Director Bill Bennett
Screenplay Bill Bennett
Photography David Bennett
Sound recordist Max Hume
Editor Max Hume
Exec. producer Jane Hume
Prod. manager Jane Hume
Prod. secretary Jane Hume
Prod. accountant Jane Hume
Art. photography Jane Hume
Publicity Jane Hume
Marketing Jane Hume
Lab. service Jane Hume
Length 10 minutes
Gang 1 item

Synopsis: A film about the history of the Australian film industry.

Prod. company: Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company: Film Australia Pty Ltd
Director: Bill Bennett
Screenplay: Bill Bennett
Photography: Bill Bennett
Sound recordist: Max Hume
Editor: Max Hume
Exec. producer: Jane Hume
Prod. manager: Jane Hume
Prod. secretary: Jane Hume
Prod. accountant: Jane Hume
Art. photography: Jane Hume
Publicity: Jane Hume
Marketing: Jane Hume
Lab. service: Jane Hume
Length: 10 minutes
Gang: 1 item

Synopsis: A film about the history of the Australian film industry.

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Production John Brundell
Co-writing Karyn Gie
Screenplay John Brundell
Off Production Moya Williams
Post Production Brian Woodall
Length 24 minutes
Group 17' video
Cast Film Writers and puppeteers from *Snowmelt*, *Adrian Marmion*, *Murray Rams* and *Ron Browning*.
Synopsis A puppet show for the Australian Electoral Commission which explains the preferential voting process to upper primary school children via a fantasy voyage to an abandoned snowmelt park.

PLAYMAKERS/MUSIC MIXERS

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Larry Bell
Screenplay Mary Collett
Prod. manager Carmen Marshall
Prod. secretary Jane Simon
Prod. accountant Walidene Warynszak
Publicity Jane Glin
Marketing John Brundell
Length 2 parts of 4 1/2-10 mins
Group Video/VHS
Synopsis Two series for upper primary school children which look at the world of theatre and music through the roles of the practitioners.

PERSONAL HEALTH VIDEOS

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Screen Green Studios Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Executive Judy Mancos
Exec. producer Jane Bell
Prod. manager Carmen Marshall
Prod. accountant Walidene Warynszak
Publicity Jane Glin
Marketing John Brundell
Length Various
Group Video
Cast Mrs. Hildebrand

Synopsis Australian women taking their own Handicare to help put schizophrenia and health problems.

A SENSE OF IDENTITY

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Jane Brundell
Screenplay Susan Humphrey
Director Tracy Mace
Prod. manager Paul Handberg
Marketing Ron Hansen
Length 30-40 minutes
Synopsis The changing role of Aboriginal women and the social developments upon which these changes have occurred. The film aims to educate the general public on the important role and continuing development that have involved Aboriginal women and to give Aboriginal women a sense of identity.

THE INDUSTRY - THE PEOPLE

BEHIND THE SCENES

Prod. company Film Australia
Dist. company Film Australia
Director Stephen Baynes
Based on books by Nathan McHugh
Photography Joel Freeman
Sound recorder Robert Stiller
Editor Douglas Stewart
Exec. producer Susan Mace
Prod. manager Nathan McHugh
Prod. secretary Judy Gains
Prod. assistant Jane Steyn
Publicity Jane Glin
Marketing Martin Wood
Length 80 minutes
Group 16mm
Cast Various
Synopsis A television documentary which tells the story of the people who built the Sydney Movement Picture House Scheme.

SPECIAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Paul Handberg
Screenplay/Screenplay Judy Phillips
Exec. producer Paul Handberg
Publicity Jane Glin
Marketing John Brundell
Length 30 mins
Group Video
Synopsis A proposed 10 minute non-broadcast television magazine to be distributed to schools to help young people with communication or intellectual disabilities.

TO ASSIST FRIENDS

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Paul Handberg
Director Peter Molloy
Synopsis Paula Dawson
From an idea by Paula Dawson
Photography Jane King
Sound recorder Howard Ipp
Editor Rodney Stinson
Prod. manager Noel Cunningham
Marketing Paul Handberg
Length 10 minutes
Group Video
Synopsis A proposed 10 minute non-broadcast television magazine to be distributed to schools to help young people with communication or intellectual disabilities.

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THE SPIN OUT

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Paul Handberg
Director Jane Moore
Screenplay Jane Moore
Executive Producer Jane Moore
Marketing Jane Moore
Length 30 mins
Group Video
Synopsis A proposed 10 minute non-broadcast television magazine to be distributed to schools to help young people with communication or intellectual disabilities.

TO ASSIST FRIENDS

Prod. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Dist. company Film Australia Pty Ltd
Producer Paul Handberg
Director Peter Molloy
Synopsis Paula Dawson
From an idea by Paula Dawson
Photography Jane King
Sound recorder Howard Ipp
Editor Rodney Stinson
Prod. manager Noel Cunningham
Marketing Paul Handberg
Length 10 minutes
Group Video
Synopsis A proposed 10 minute non-broadcast television magazine to be distributed to schools to help young people with communication or intellectual disabilities.

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 Prod. manager
 Unit manager
 Location manager
 Prod. secretary
 Prod. accountant
 Accounts assistant
 Int. ext. director
 Int. ext. director
 Int. ext. director
 Continuity
 Camera director
 Camera operator
 Int. ext. camera
 Int. ext. focus puller
 Int. electrician
 Safety supervisor
 Construction mgr.
 Art construction mgr.
 Construction crew

Artistic vehicle coord.
 Artisans
 Props/puller
 Clapper loader
 Key grip
 New grip
 Gaffer
 Boom operator
 Art director
 Camera director
 Make up master
 Make up assistant
 Hairdresser

supervisor
 Wardrobe crew
 Laundry technician
 Props buyer
 Laundry prep
 Set dresser
 Special effects
 Set decorator
 Carpenter

Exec. producer
 Prod. coordinator
 Prod. photographer
 Director
 Exec. producer
 Producer
 Unit producer
 Camera
 Cam. Operator Thomas, Andrew Clarke,
 James Huxley, Barbara Wilson, Douglas
 Alexander, Charles Tappinell, David Jayne
 Synopsis: The return of beautiful fashion
 designer Irena Chait to her native Australia
 is the catalyst for a cocktail of love,
 jealousy and deceit. A tragic tale, a self-
 destructive young man and two lovers -
 one a powerful yet desperate woman, the
 other a handsome but flawed go getter -
 create a web of passion to engulf and
 destroy.

CASTING

Prod. co.
 Exec. producer
 Supervising producer
 Exec. producer
 Assistant

ACTF Productions Ltd
 Patricia Edgar
 Bruce Barman
 Bruce Campbell
 Peter Fida
 Paul Williams
 Maggie Graham
 Neil Robinson
 Richard Channing
 Michael Curtis

Budget
 Length
 Genre
 Synopsis: (Summers hall) Intense relationship
 drama for the under 25 age group, the
 most of unusual and regular characters

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EXR 3145 film 18,500 Daylight in 35 mm
EXR 7145 film 11,500 Daylight in 16 mm

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